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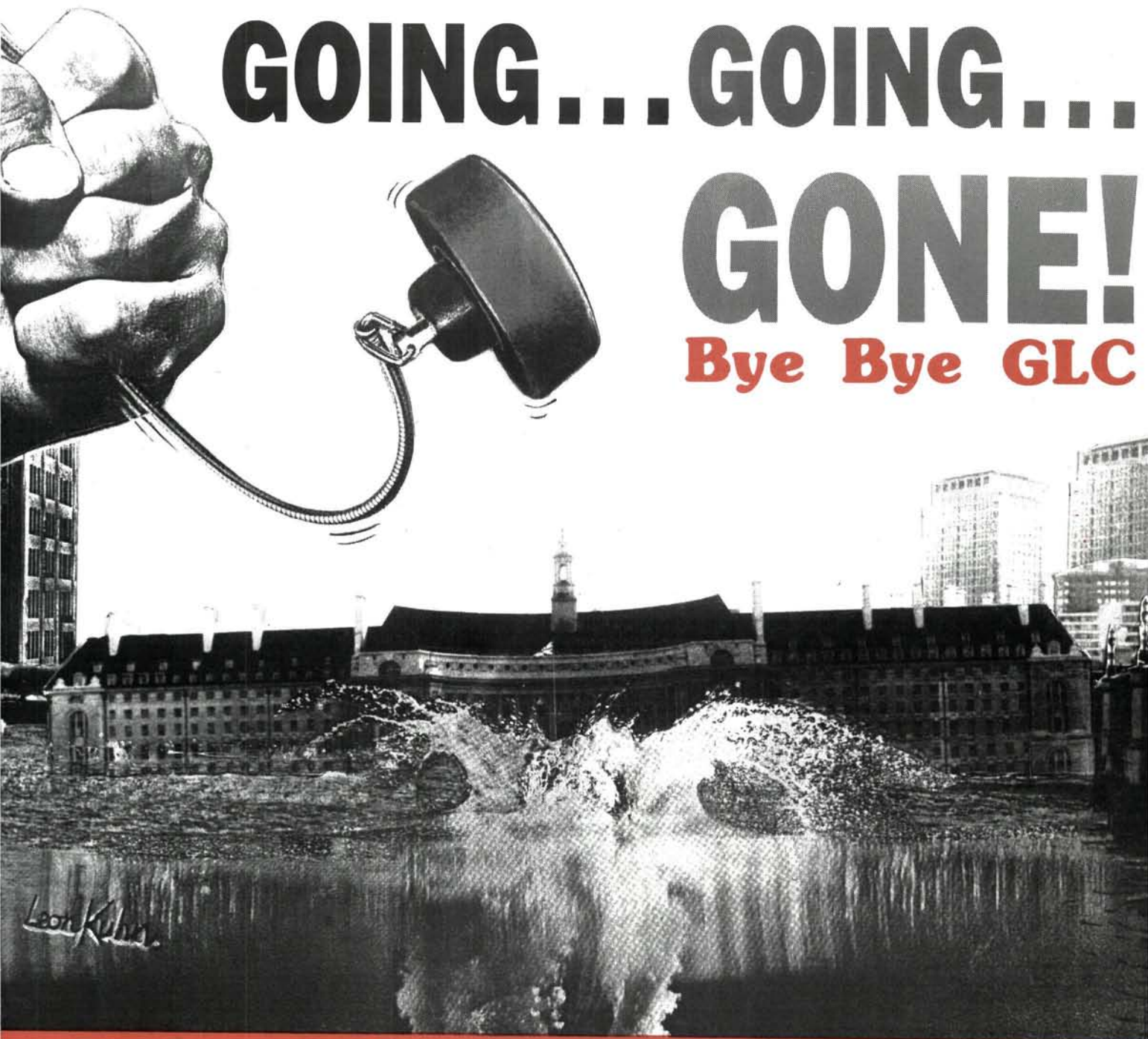
New Statesman

Special tier-jerker issue

21 March 1986 80p IR£1.30 US$1.50 By Air

GOING...GOING...GONE!

Bye Bye GLC



MARTHA GELLHORN: Yankee, go home

ANDREW RISSIK: Shakespeare wallies

PETER KELLNER: Nigel's penultimate Budget

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Which British Industry contributes more to GDP — culture or cars?

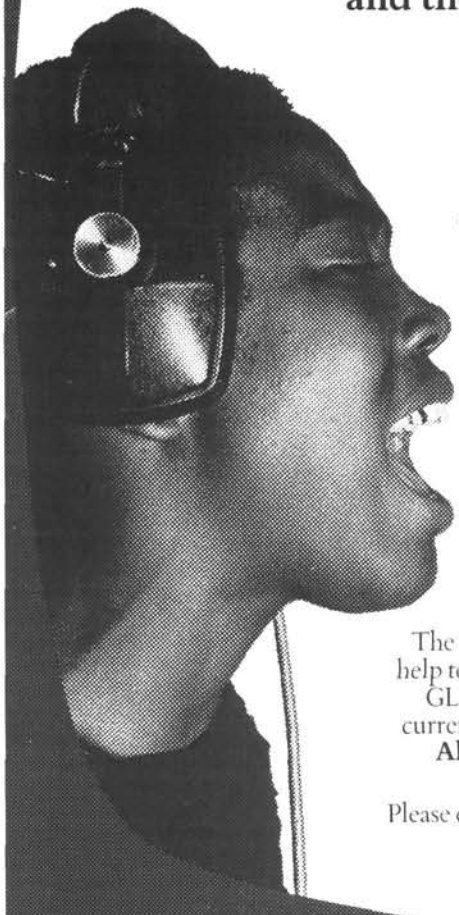
Which country has more video recorders per head than any other?

In terms of employment, which is the largest manufacturing sector in London?

Which organisation is the biggest sponsor of the arts in Britain?

Why are Saatchi & Saatchi so keen on satellite broadcasting?

What have Angela Carter, Aswad, Rankin Ann and the Other America got in common?



For the answers to these and many other burning questions about the cultural industries read . . .

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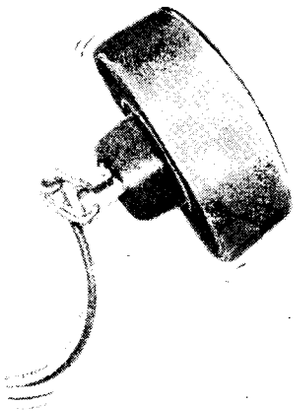
New Statesman



Cover drawing: Leon Kuhn

Bye bye GLC
As the GLC and the Met. Councils watch the last hours tick off the clock before abolition at midnight 31 March we concentrate on the capital and ask

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NEXT WEEK

ASSETS FOR SALE

NEIL KINNOCK will be telling why the sale of British Leyland is 'not simply economically unwise, it is a downright betrayal of responsibility'

ALL THAT JAZZ

The Camden Jazz Festival is back. CHARLES FOX tunes in to the sounds

SPRING BOOKS

Margaret Atwood (below) is one of the novelists whose latest work is reviewed by GRACE INGOLDBY; also in this special books issue CATHERINE BELSEY on feminist literary criticism, SIMON FRITH on Judith Williamson's view of popular culture, ALISON

HENNEGAN on Helen Waddell, MICHAEL GOLDFARB on Studs Terkel — and ANDREW LUMSDEN finds out just how useful two new books on Aids are

New Statesman

Vol 111 No 2869 21 March 1986

Nifty Nigel plays Budget politics again

CHANCELLOR LAWSON'S third budget was a breathtaking piece of cheek. He did not really bother even to pretend that he was actively trying to help the poor and the unemployed. After the sudden fall in the world oil price, he had decided that he had about £1 billion to give away this year and he gave it to those who are already in the better off half of the community — by taking 1p off the standard rate of income tax, with the corresponding reduction in the amount of Advanced Corporation Tax withheld when company dividends are distributed.

Within the rest of his totals, he juggled things to make it easier for those with money to make more and keep it, not by way of creating new jobs or financing productive economic activity but by way of capital gains and a further reduction in the scope of taxes on capital. The existing Business Expansion Scheme, which Lawson — bold as brass — declares to have been 'an outstanding success', has in reality been a way for the very rich to use refunds from the taxman to make gambling investments in small companies. Even he has had to admit that 'too much BES money' has been going into purposes for which it was not intended, like farmland, property development and 'companies whose main purpose is to invest in objects, such as fine wines'. But none of this caused him to hesitate before extending the experimental BES indefinitely.

The most brazen (and unexpected) concession to the owners of capital, though, was the abolition of any tax on 'lifetime gifts'. Lawson has in effect swept away all taxes on the transfer of capital, other than the Estate Duty that a Liberal Chancellor, Sir William Harcourt, introduced in 1894. This tax — popularly known as death duty — became in effect a voluntary impost paid only by those who for whatever reason (intense dislike of close relatives, for example) failed to take accountants' advice and the simple steps required to avoid it. That was why in 1974 a Labour government introduced the Capital Transfer Tax in an only partially successful attempt to make capital bear some of the tax burden placed on income. But Chancellor Lawson has chosen to make himself the toast of every millionaire and large landowner by putting the fiscal clock firmly back to 1894. As Peter Kellner shows on page 9, virtually every line of the 1986 Lawson budget arithmetic is designed to do right by 'our people'.

By contrast the schemes announced in the Budget directly aimed at those who are unemployed carried all the generous conviction of the poor house. A bit more YTS for those under 18 and Community Programme for the long term unemployed, a counselling scheme for those who need a job not advice. And there was the Chancellor not apologising — as with income tax — that he could only do so much this year but hoped to do more next. Instead, with what seemed like positive pride, he was saying that the whole of this package for the unemployed could be kept to £195 million this year and that it would not really even cost that much because £95 million of that would be offset by lower social security payments and, in any case, the whole thing was being met out of the contingency reserve, so that there would be no increase in the total of planned government spending.

As Maurice Peston correctly predicted in last week's issue, this budget was wholly irrelevant to the chronic economic and industrial problems facing this country. Lawson's aim was entirely political,

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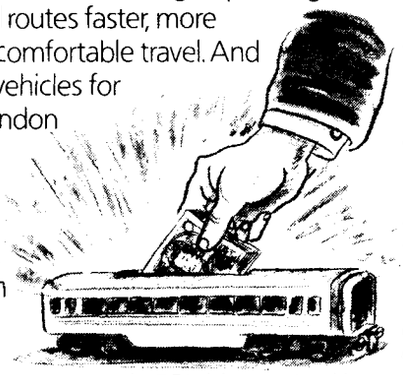
On the right line.

Roll on, 1988. BR is spending nearly £2 million a week for three years on new trains. 468 'Sprinter' diesel vehicles will give passengers on provincial routes faster, more reliable and comfortable travel. And 184 electric vehicles for the Cross London Link in the London and South Eastern area.



This batch of orders for passenger trains is the largest-ever in BR's history. And it shows BR's commitment to running really good local network into the next century.

Radio signalling keeps country lines open.

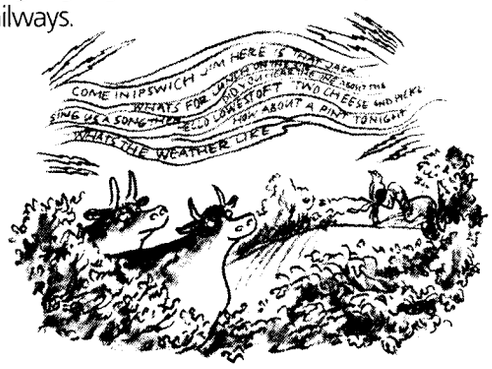
New technology is now cutting the cost of lines like the East Suffolk one, between Ipswich and Lowestoft, where track and signalling account for at least half the running costs.

BR's Research Division has created a new system of signalling known as the electronic 'token' which has already been very successful on the Kyle of Lochalsh line in the Scottish highlands.

The old semaphore signals give way to radio communications between the signalman and the driver. The whole 48-mile route will be controlled from a radio centre at Saxmundham.

Track maintenance costs will be slashed too by singling the line for large parts of the journey. And 22 level crossings will be automated.

All of which will ensure that people in East Anglia get greater value for money from their railways.



We're getting there.

to stop the steady erosion of the Tory vote.

His fig leaf of economic theory was that his measures were a continuation of Tory policies designed to create 'an enterprise culture'. If the result of eight such Tory budgets is that British manufacturing industry's output is still some 5 per cent *below* its 1979 level, someone other than Chancellor Lawson might be forgiven for concluding that the last seven years have been a monumental and irrecoverable economic tragedy. □

No representation without taxation

IN THE LIST of events that have shown the Thatcher government in its true colours — high-handed, anti-democratic, stubborn — the abolition of the Greater London Council and the Metropolitan County Councils has a high place. Central government pushed through legislation to do away with democratically elected tiers of government, not as part of any rationally planned change, but out of political spite.

These councils were controlled by the government's political opponents and were using a mandate every bit as legitimate as the government's in order to pursue alternative policies. It mattered not that the new arrangements to take their place would be less efficient and more expensive. It mattered not that 74 per cent were saying 'No' to 'No say'.

For all that, from the end of this month they will be gone and London will be the only capital city in the world without some kind of unitary government of its own. The question, therefore, is open as to what kind of structure of local government a post-Thatcher administration should aim for in place of the Victorian shambles of unco-ordinated bodies that it will inherit. We have rightly been defending the GLC and the Met Counties against Thatcherism. But once they no longer exist, there is no reason why they have to be reinvented in their present form.

The key point is that the form and the finance of local government are inextricably intertwined. Unless it is intended that local government should simply be the local agent of Whitehall's policies and whims (which has for years under all governments increasingly been the case), then it must have *some* genuinely discretionary powers. The recent reality is that either in the name of overall control of the economy, or in the name of implementing governent policy, such discretionary powers have been whittled to virtually nil.

In that case, as we have seen, the idea of democratically accountable local government ceases to have any real meaning. The elected councillors of Liverpool — Militant and non-Militant alike — took the view that what was being done for Merseyside was totally inadequate. And they were right. But when they sought to express this view politically, they found that so long as they stayed within Whitehall's rules they were in a political straitjacket.

Liverpool ought to be a warning, too, for what will undoubtedly happen if Scotland eventually gets its own elected assembly but that assembly is wholly dependent on Westminster for its funding. It would be a recipe for instant political disaster. A structure would have been created in which perfectly justified and open-ended political demands for more spending on Scottish problems would come up permanently against central government's resistance to putting up more taxpayers' money.

The starting point for any future reform of local government must therefore be the search for some mechanism by which whatever authority is set up has some source of revenue, raised by itself or granted by automatic formula, which it can spend according to its *own* political priorities. Anything else is just an expensive municipal charade. □

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Sunday Times — THE HAEMORRHAGE 1981-86

JOURNALISTS have taken flight from Rupert Murdoch's proprietorship in other countries besides Britain — but it's been at its worst here at the *Sunday Times*. JOAN SMITH reports

Granada

Ian Jack, one more piece of dead wood, getting his journalist of the year award

THE EXODUS began as soon as Murdoch acquired the paper five years ago in 1981; accelerated when the now widely-disliked Andrew Neil took over as editor in October 1983; and with the move to Wapping has gone into triple figures.

How you interpret this unprecedented turnover in editorial staff — in the pre-Murdoch era, *Sunday Times* journalists were unusually loyal by Fleet Street standards — depends on where you stand. For Neil, interviewed in the newspaper industry's trade paper, *UK Press Gazette*, it has been an exercise in 'clearing out the dead wood at the ST to make way for the young journalists to join'. The cost of the 'exercise' in redundancy payments has been £750,000.

Not all the journalists we list below fall into the 'dissident' category. Over a period of five years, some staff changes are of course inevitable. But the fact is that many have left because they don't like what has happened to their famous paper under Murdoch's ownership; and particularly the changes that have taken place under the leadership of Andrew Neil. And, as our table shows, many of these people have been snapped up elsewhere — what Neil regards as dead wood apparently looks like healthy timber to other journalistic organisations.

With the dispute caused by the move to Wapping in its eighth week, there are signs that the battle isn't going entirely Murdoch's way. The turnout at last Saturday night's blockade of the plant — at least 7,000 — was the biggest yet and, crucially, delayed the exit of lorries carrying the *Sunday Times* and *News of the World* for five hours.

Delays on this scale are enough to ensure that the papers don't reach anything like the number of readers they would in normal circumstances. It is on this point that the *Sunday Times*, with its huge advertising revenue, is particularly vulnerable. If copies are held up week after week — a real possibility now that demonstrators no longer have to brave arctic weather — advertisers are going to become very unhappy about paying to reach an audience the *Sunday Times* cannot deliver.

It is this, combined with the persistent rumour that printing capacity at Wapping is being stretched to breaking-point by the necessity to produce both Sunday papers there, that is likely to force News International to negotiate.

How Neil views the struggle — codenamed Operation Gold by the police — may be gauged by the role in it he has assigned to his proprietor. Instead of dialling telephone numbers in the old-fashioned way, Neil has already programmed them into his super whizz-bang hi-tech phone; to reach a particular number, all he has to do is punch in a code. No prizes for guessing the code name he's given Murdoch's private number — he puts in the word RAMBO. ●

Facts wanted on Wapping

THE PUBLIC Order Research Group is compiling information on the police operation at Wapping. They want to hear from pickets who have been arrested, witnesses to arrests, local residents who have been affected by police behaviour, and anyone else with interesting information. Write to Cathie Lloyd at the Public Order Research Group, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG, or leaves a message on their answerphone: 01 734 5831. ●

Murdoch buys in (1981)

Roland ADBURGHAM ● John BARRY ● Michael BILTON ● Alan BRIEN ● Geoffrey CANNON ● Malcolm CRAWFORD ● Hunter DAVIES ● Tony DAWE ● Robert DUCAS ● Harry EVANS ● John FRYER ● Shirley FREEMAN ● Tony GERAGHTY ● David GWYNNE-JONES ● Ron HALL ● Denis HERBSTEIN ● Phil JACOBSON ● Peter LENNON ● Magnus LINKLATER ● David MAY ● Derek MERCER ● Richard MILNER ● Ian NAIRN ● Phillip NORMAN ● Gwen NUTTALL ● Jean ROBERTSON ● Keith RICHARDSON ● Lucy SISMAN ● Audrey SLAUGHTER ● Lorana SULLIVAN ● Edwin TAYLOR ● Peter WATSON ● Bryan WHARTON ● Jenny WILSON

Neil made editor (1983)

Chris ANGELOGLOU ● Stephen ARIS ● Lionel BARBER ● John BALL ● Muriel BOWEN ● Mary BROOKS ● John COATES ● Susie CORNFEILD ● James DANZIGER ● George DARBY ● Peter DUNN ● Paul EDDY ● Stephen FAY ● Patrick FORMAN ● Peter GILLMAN ● Christopher HIRD ● Joyce HOPKIRK ● Judith JACKSON ● Eric JACOBS ● Martin KETTLE ● Phillip KNIGHTLEY ● David LIPSEY ● Suzanne LOWRY ● Brian MacARTHUR ● Liam MacAULEY ● Don McCULLIN ● Don MacINTYRE ● Tony MASCARENHAS ● Linda MELVERN ● Alison MILLER ● Roy PERROTT ● Justine PICARDIE ● Charles RAW ● Berry RITCHIE ● Rosemary RIGHTER ● John RYLE ● Sue SEDDON ● Colin SIMPSON ● John SHIRLEY ● Joan SMITH ● Robert TAYLOR ● Dorothy WADE ● Maureen WALKER ● John WHALE ● Patience WHEATCROFT ● Hugo YOUNG

Move to Wapping (1986)

Don BERRY (Managing editor, features) — refusenik, since resigned to join *Daily Telegraph* ● **Ann BOSTON** (Literary sub-editor) — refusenik ● **Bob CAMPBELL** (Chief sub-editor) — resigned to join the *Scotsman* ● **Colin CLIFFORD** (Financial correspondent) — refusenik ● **Harry COEN** ('Spectrum' editor) — refusenik ● **Neil COLLINS** (City editor) — resigned to join *Daily Telegraph* ● **Chris CURTAIN** (Features sub-editor) — resigned to join *Today* ● **Kim FLETCHER** (Labour editor) — refusenik ● **Sean FRENCH** (Deputy literary editor) — refusenik ● **Max HASTINGS** (Star writer) — resigned to edit *Daily Telegraph* ● **Veronica HORWELL** (News-features writer) — resigned ● **Ian JACK** (Star writer and journalist of the year) — resigned ● **George JONES** (Political correspondent) — resigned to join *Daily Telegraph* ● **Tony LEVENE** (Investment editor) — refusenik ● **Robin MEAD** (Sports sub-editor) — refusenik ● **Renata RUBINKOWICZ** ('Look' sub-editor) — refusenik ● **Keith SUTTON** (Magazine sub-editor) — refusenik ● **Stephanie THOMPSON** (Magazine sub-editor) — refusenik ● **Claire TOMALIN** (Literary editor) — refusenik ● **Brian WHITAKER** ('Insight') — refusenik, since resigned to join *Guardian* ● **Paul WEBSTER** (Chief sub-editor, Business news) — refusenik, since resigned to join *Guardian*

Note: this is a record of fact to the best of our knowledge and does not ascribe identical motives to all individuals.

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Peace Protests Roll Call (25)

Total arrested in the UK and Eire since September 1981: 10,167

Arrests to date by location

Alconbury USAF base, Cambridgeshire **5**
14.2.86. 7 women attempted to set up a new camp outside the base. When they arrived early in the morning they surprised troops in the middle of a NATO exercise. The women drove their caravan into position whilst the soldiers hastily broke camp and disappeared. Police later dragged women out through the windows of the caravan when they refused to unlock the door. Five were arrested. On 5 March at Huntingdon magistrates Lorna Richardson pleaded not guilty but was fined £25 with £15 costs. Four others pleaded not guilty and their case has been adjourned until 22 April. One of the women was given 28 days in Holloway for non-payment of two fines resulting from other actions.

RAF Bentwaters, Nr. Woodbridge, Suffolk
20.2.86. 4 people arrested on Snowball action in September were found guilty and were each fined £20 with damages of £22.

ROC Bunker, Helsby Hill, Northwich, Nr. Chester
27.2.86. 6 people charged with criminal damage amounting to £700 appeared at Northwich magistrates'. Two pleaded not guilty and were each fined £90. Four not guilty pleas were fined £120.

USAF Lakenheath, Suffolk **4**
23.2.86. 4 women cut through five security fences in the full glare of powerful searchlights. The women were strip-searched and have made a formal complaint about this. They were later released without charge.

Faslane Submarine base, Nr. Helensburgh **18**
18-19.1.86. 18 arrested on Snowball action and charged with criminal damage.

Kelvedon Hatch Bunker, Essex **6**
18-19.1.86. 6 people arrested on Snowball action and charged with criminal damage.

Ministry of Defence, Whitehall **8**
11.2.86. 8 members of Catholic Peace Action arrested outside MoD after an Ash Wednesday prayer meeting. The eight who were arrested had marked a wall and pillars with ash and were later charged with criminal damage. Catholic Dominican priest Roger Ruston had earlier blessed the charcoal ash.

USAF Greenham Common **16**
13 women were arrested inside the base during January at Greenham and all were charged under the military bylaws.
21.1.86. 2 Greenham women were arrested when the convoy came back to the base. Charged with criminal damage, and one of them charged also with 'assault' on a policeman.
25.2.86. Lucy Mallard arrested after throwing eggs at convoy. She was dragged backwards by police roughly — her clothes rode up her body leaving her top half naked. She claims that she was later thrown into the back of a police van full of police constables but no women police constables. Ms Mallard said that they were discussing rape and a pornographic card game. She was disgusted by them and has made a formal complaint.

USAF Mildenhall, Suffolk **35**
7.3.86. 35 protesters cut through security fence at the base and sprayed CND symbols on two Hercules tanker aircraft. Released later but may yet be charged.
Snowball prison senteces at USAF Sculthorpe. 31 Snowballers have now served, or are serving their sentences, but many others still await arrest at home for non-payment of fines. Angie Zelter sentenced to 28 days on four counts and two year suspended sentece — she would appreciate letters at Holloway Jail.

● From the US bi-weekly base newspaper at USAF Comiso in Italy. Entitled 'Commander's Hotline':
Cowboy Hats
Q: I was told this weekend that we can't wear cowboy hats around the base?
A: No problem on base. But we have asked all personnel not to wear clothing that makes you stand out when off base in the local communities — we stand out enough without having to wear unusual or unique clothing items. It's hard to 'blend in' downtown in normal attire — it's impossible if you are wearing a ten-gallon Stetson.

Please send new information to **Janey Hulme** *at the* New Statesman

OFFICIAL: CEGB PLUTONIUM *DID* GO TO THE MILITARY

THE OFFICIAL version of what has happened to Britain's fissile plutonium has been thrown into fresh doubt by the CEGB chair Lord Walter Marshall and the head of the European Commission's energy directorate, Christopher Audland. ROB EDWARDS reports

MARSHALL was asked in an interview for this week's Thames *TV Eye* programme whether plutonium for CEGB reactors before 1969 had been used for military purposes. He replied: 'I don't know what it was used for, but it has gone into military stockpile . . . the government said that very openly. There is no secret about that.'

In fact, all the government has previously admitted is that plutonium for CEGB reactors before 1969 has been sent to the US in exchange for enriched uranium which has been used for military purposes in this country. Marshall appears to be going significantly further by suggesting that some of the plutonium has actually been transferred to the military.

Earlier Marshall failed to rebut effectively the allegations by the former CEBG chair, the late Lord Hinton, that the CEGB was telling 'bloody lies' when it told the Sizewell enquiry that none of its plutonium had been used in nuclear weapons. Marshall said that he could not speak for the plutonium produced by the CEGB reactors prior to 1969 because it was then owned by the UK Atomic Energy Authority, of which he is also a former chair. Until 1973 the Authority was responsible for Britain's nuclear weapons programme.

When Audland was asked by *TV Eye* whether plutonium from CEGB reactors had been used in the military cycle in the UK, he replied: 'There are moves of nuclear material from the civil to the military side, yes.' After this remark was put to Marshall on camera last week, the interview was stopped at the CEGB's insistence to allow consultations to take place between the CEGB, Audland and the Department of Energy.

There is also new evidence that the four or so tonnes of CEGB plutonium which the government has admitted has gone to the US will end up being used for military research. According to the US department of energy, the civil nuclear research effort is next year going to be redirected into military research, including Star Wars. ●

Rob Edwards was co-ordinator of CND's case at the Sizewell enquiry. Additional research by David Lowry

Fulham latest: bookies plump for Raynsford

Labour has a commanding lead in the poll that matters for the by-election at Fulham on 10 April. What matters is cash up front, and the bookies have Labour odds-on favourites to win.

After the Budget, Ladbroke marked Labour up to 4-7 on and pushed the Tories down to 4-1, having had them neck and neck with the second-place SDP, now 5-2. William Hill never thought much of the Tories, and rate the SDP candidate slightly better than Ladbroke at 9-4, with Labour at 4-6.

For those of you who don't spend every waking hour in the bookies (and don't intend to, despite their introduction of potted plants, carpets and live telly), this means if you bet £6 on Labour you get £4 back (and your £6 stake) if Nick Raynsford wins. If you believe in the Alliance, go to Ladbroke, where you win £5 (plus stake) for every £2 invested.

Applying our famous Tick Tack Index, the percentage scores for the by-election are:

Labour	55%
SDP	26%
Tories	19%

(Probabilities of each party winning implied by the odds.)

Meanwhile, there's been little change in the main Index on the next General Election. Since our last round-up (*NS* 31 January), Ladbroke have decided that the Liberal/SDP Alliance is more likely to be the largest party, moving them up from 8-1 to 7-1. If you want to bet on the Tories for the next election, go to William Hill at 10-11 on; otherwise go to Coral for Labour at 5-4 or Alliance at 12-1. The overall scores are unchanged: Tories 49 per cent, Labour 41 per cent, Alliance 10 per cent.

John Rentoul

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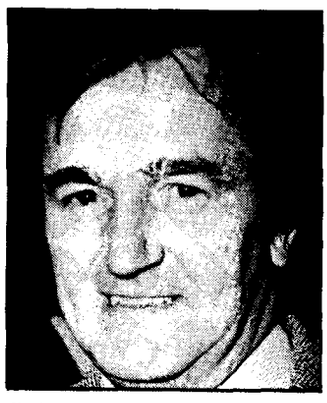
LAMBETH'S SERVICES — HARDLY WORTH DEFENDING

ROUTINE incompetence, as opposed to wilful misconduct, doesn't attract surcharge or disqualification. Which is just as well for Lambeth councillors, since their borough's administration of the housing benefit system has been a disaster from start to finish, reports CHRISTIAN WOLMAR

THE COUNCIL has failed to process thousands of housing benefit claims and has acted illegally by reclaiming overpayments to its own tenants without warning, and without going through the proper legal process. The failure of the scheme has contributed to the council's current record rent arrears of £13 million.

Sixty per cent of Lambeth's 100,000 households depend at least in part on housing benefit, and at the end of last year in the private sector alone there was a backlog of 18,000 cases waiting for assessment. According to the council, it takes seven to eight weeks for a claim to be processed, although legally it's supposed to be done within 14 days. But a worker in the housing benefit office tells the *NS*: 'Forms are simply left on people's desks or filed away and forgotten . . . claimants only get paid when they start hassling us or a councillor intervenes. Our workload is ridiculous — about 1,300 cases per person whereas in a good council you get about 500.'



City Syndication

Red Ted: couldn't run a whelk stall, most of these young fellows

At the root of the chaos is a bodged attempt at computerisation, and a division of responsibility for the scheme between two departments. It's *not* the fault of central government's squeeze on local government — 60 per cent of the administrative costs and nearly all the benefit paid out is refunded by the DoE. Martin Evans of North Lambeth Law Centre reckons the main problem, apart from delay, is overpayment, and the illegal recovery of overpayments: 'Giros arrive without proper explanation of what they are for. Then suddenly some people find they are several hundred pounds in rent arreas without warning.'

One ex-employee of the council was jailed last year following the discovery of a racket whereby some council staff paid *themselves* giros. The case led to the district auditor being called in. He recommended a number of changes which, according to housing chair Helen Smith 'have, ironically, been incredibly helpful.'

Ms Smith accepts that the benefit system is in a bad state but says that the Tories were in power in Lambeth when the system was introduced and that 'in any case, all inner London boroughs are experiencing similar difficulties.'

But the second claim is untrue: Camden's system has attracted praise nationally, and only neighbouring Tory-run Croydon (*NS* 1 November and 20 December 1985) appears to be in such deep waters. ●

Christian Wolmar writes for the Observer

BR ignored TNT warnings

BRITISH RAIL was warned by the railway unions that Rupert Murdoch's News International intended to switch its newspaper distribution from rail to road, three months before the move to Wapping.

But BR ignored the warning. In a letter dated 28 October 1985, it told the National Union of Railwaymen that it was aware of 'TNT developments' (TNT is the road haulage firm which distributes Murdoch's papers) but that 'the best defence against road distribution of newspapers is to keep the BR system running to enable us to meet our contractual obligations and so avoid situations arising where we are unable to do so.'

BR said this week that the move to Wapping took it by surprise.

The newspaper distribution business is worth £27 million to BR, of which £9 million is accounted for by Murdoch's papers. BR is currently consulting its legal advisers about its contract with News International.

If BR fails to regain Murdoch's business then the rest of the country's papers are likely to switch to road, because it will undermine the economics of carrying newspapers by rail.

That will in turn have a disastrous effect on the country's late night revellers, in areas where the paper train is the only way to get home after midnight.

Mick Hamer

MISCELLANY

And she should know

'Many people don't like Norman Tebbit's thuggish approach — I don't think that it goes down very well,' the *Guardian*'s 'Monday people' quoted Sharon Spiers as saying at the Tory Central Council in Felixtowe. Who is this Sharon Spiers? The *Guardian* described her as an 'an activist from Deptford, south London', but the truth is much more interesting. Ms Spiers works for the Harris Research Centre — on the Tories' private opinion polls. Which makes her opinion on the popularity or otherwise of Norman Tebbit's style rather more authoritative than that of your average south London activist. Did James Naughtie, who wrote the piece, not know this — or was it the *Guardian*'s notoriously cackhanded sub-editors who removed the vital piece of information?

Hayhoe's apartheid

Only four years after Houston, Texas, got out the first 'safer sex' advisory brochure on Aids, our own DHSS, as we all know, has at last started its Are You At Risk From Aids? *press campaign. On Thursday 13 March, health minister Barney Hayhoe held a press briefing in a Commons committee room.* Guardian, Times, *whatnot. We couldn't see any familiar faces from the gay press. 'They've been asked to a special briefing at the DHSS Elephant & Castle offices' said a DHSS organiser. 'And has it been made clear to them' we asked 'that they'd be welcome here too?' 'I believe so' she said. It hadn't. They weren't invited. Hayhoe presided at the Commons briefing, didn't turn up at the Elephant one. An* apartheid: *a health minister launching an Aids campaign who will talk to the straight press journalists, but not the gay. In the year of our Lord 1986.*

Rendered helpless

Thirty four medical secretaries from Luton and Dunstable Hospital have gone on strike — with the support of the consultants they work for. Consultants have clubbed together and given them £1,000 for their strike fund, and at least fifteen of them have been seen on the picket lines 'in a morale boosting capacity'. The medical secretaries have been asking to be regraded for the last 13 years (on average they clear only £70 a week). 'We're patient people — but everyone has their limit', says Jean Taylor. Their supporters recognise, it seems, that behind every great consultant lies a medical secretary. 'They tell us it's chaos in there without us — they can't get anything done', says Ms Taylor.

Geldof's *first* snub

The BBC showed the 'Live Aid' concert, and got huge audiences and a BAFTA award for it. Channel 4 didn't. But it could have done: Bob Geldof offered it to John Cummings, C4's commissioning editor for youth, for a mere £60,000. Cummings, a former researcher on The Tube,

turned it down. He therefore wins the Miscellany/*BAFTA award for the best missed opportunity of the year.*

Profits for the people

People made money for the miners from the BT share-issue. And now a friend of ours has just 'stagged' the Wellcome Foundation issue, sold enough shares to cover his costs and given the remainder to the Terrence Higgins Trust, the Aids charity. If you can't and won't join 'em, beat 'em. With salvos of warnings about the risks of speculation, we hereby launch — tapping the most expert advice we can find — the *New Statesman* Stock Exchange Collection Can Project. Of course we *would* choose Budget week and the top of the market, but here goes with our first recommendation. It has to be a 'sell' order. The bank manager will tell you what to do. Our tipster is in agreement with brokers De Zoete Bevan that overseas trader Paterson Zochonis is a 'sell'. (The shares have risen in price dramatically since recent better-than-expected results.) If you make a 'Turn', War on Want, we're sure, would love to be an appropriate beneficiary. We'll report back on how the gamble goes — grovel if Paterson Zochonis soars; demand to hear what you did with the ill-gottens if it slumps. Only use *absolute spare money*, if there's anyone left alive on the Left with such a thing.

This week's Good News

Hannah Wright, the NS*'s former food correspondent, has won the André Simon memorial prize for the best cookery book of 1985. It's for* Soups, *an unusual and witty book,' it says here, 'covering the entire range of soaps . . . a hugely enjoyable treat'. It's published by Robert Hale: get it while you can!*

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SCRUTINY

APRES NOUS LA SECHERESSE

The GLC and metropolitan councils will be abolished at midnight on 31 March. The *New Statesman*'s 'Bye 'Bye GLC special issue is on pp 10-16; here we scrutinise the fate of voluntary organisations, enterprise boards and an assortment of secondhand local politicians

THE LONDON Voluntary Service Council estimates that the capital's voluntary bodies face a £15-20 million a year 'gap'. If we assume that three-quarters of their costs are salaries, that means the loss of over 11,000 jobs in London alone.

Voluntary bodies are funded from the 'tuppenny rate', the power by which councils can spend money on schemes for the benefit of their inhabitants, but which aren't part of their statutory services. Between 64 and 90 per cent of the GLC and metropolitan councils' spending of this kind is on economic development and job creation — which they've no specific legal authority to spend money on. The rest — including grants to lesbian and gay, Black, disabled and other minority groups — is what Tory propaganda has latched onto.

After abolition, the borough and district councils that want to take over these schemes will have to find the money out of their *own* tuppenny rate (the amount raised by a 2p rate).

The GLC's last-ditch attempt to provide 'forward funding' — to keep favoured groups going until the next Labour government — has been halted by Tory Westminster council's court action. If appeal is allowed to the House of Lords, the outcome won't matter as the GLC will be no more.

Random examples of projects threatened by the Westminster case are the GLC's benefits take-up project and the Homeless Volunteer programme. But abolition has had indirect effects too. The London Fields Health Project, which was going to be an alternative health centre offering acupuncture, osteopathy and homeopathy in run-down inner-city Hackney, has collapsed because the GLC doesn't have enough people or time to process the £50,000 grant approved in July 1985.

At the grass roots, among the workers in hundreds of projects and their 'clients', it's the uncertainty more than anything which is finishing off the (mostly far from radical) municipal socialism of Britain's urban areas. 'There is a terrible strain on staff,' says Joe Simpson, fundraiser for Community Service Volunteers. 'All their mental energy is being used up in worrying about funding and job security.'

Jane Dibblin and John Rentoul

Where to next?

A by-product of abolition is the turning of hundreds of (mainly Labour) politicians onto the streets. It's all right for the like of Ken Livingstone, MP-to-be in Brent East, but what about the others?

The leader of Tyne and Wear, Michael Campbell, is over 70 and doesn't have any plans. Nor has Bernard Clarke, leader of Greater Manchester Council, who says it would've been wrong to look elsewhere while 'fighting the good fight' against abolition.

Several abolishees are dropping down a tier and (re)turning to district level politics. Gordon Morgan, leader of West Midlands county council, is over retirement age, but is standing for Sandwell district council in the 8 May elections. John Gunnell, chemistry teacher and leader of West Yorkshire, and is standing for the same Leeds ward of Hunslet on 8 May. Mike Ward, deputy leader of the GLC after last year's rates fiasco, would probably like to be leader of a Labour-controlled Wandsworth council — currently Tory London's privatisation flagship.

And, as we reported last week, Keva Coombes, leader of Merseyside,is being entreated to stand in his Everton ward for Liverpool city, to provide an alternative leadership to Militant 'after the expulsions'.

For all the talk of the GLC being a national platform for ambitious local politicians, only Ken Livingstone, housing chair Tony McBrearty and Paul Boateng have been selected for winnable parliamentary seats. Meanwhile GLC women's committee chair Valerie Wise and Inner London Education Authority leader Frances Morrell are both in contention for Hyndburn (aka Accrington, Lancashire). Outside London Geoff Edge, West Midlands economic chief, has been selected for marginal Birmingham Yardley. But in London at least, lower-tier council leaders seem to have done much better in selection contests. ●

Abandoning HMS W Yorks, etc (top to bottom): Cllr Gunnell, 1988 MP Edge, Derek Hatton's successor Coombes and possible MP Wise

Left enterprise splits Tories

A campaign by right-wing Tories to close down the Greater London Enterprise Board (GLEB) has split the Conservative party and the Cabinet — allowing GLEB and the other boards to survive in some form.

Head of the nasties is millionaire deputy leader of the GLC Tories, Cyril Taylor, who led a successful lobby of 10 Downing Street to freeze £8 million of GLEB's money at the last minute. The Department of the Environment had already indicated that the cash, from the GLC, would be released. Backing him is Norman Tebbit, who has said that he sees GLEB as a precursor of an alternative socialist industrial strategy.

One of Taylor's more moderate colleagues said last week: 'The Right fear the acclaim GLEB has had which they think will lead to this kind of interventionism becoming respectable.'

In the pink corner is Environment Secretary Kenneth Baker, one of whose senior officials wrote to the GLC last December: 'The Secretary of State hopes that as many London boroughs as possible will become members of GLEB.' Behind him is the other Kenneth — Clarke, Employment Minister, wet — who told journalists only a month ago that he felt there was a need for more local public job creation agencies. And earlier Energy Minister Peter Walker had written a letter congratulating the work of GLEB's energy and employment network.

Cyril Taylor's group of right-wing ideologues thought a series of corruption scandals and the failure of two investments last year had finished GLEB off, and were furious when the Tory boroughs of Bexley, Ealing and Brent joined 11 Labour councils in taking over GLEB's funding — at a reduced level. They were particularly incensed because of GLEB's policies of supporting worker co-ops, industrial democracy and equality for Black people and women at work.

But last week Taylor was boasting to fellow Tories that he'd 'scuppered GLEB' by getting Mrs Thatcher to intervene and overrule 'the softies at the Department of the Environment'. Lord Elton, Baker's deputy, announced a total ban on the release of GLC money on 12 March.

Despite this, the GLEB boroughs met last Friday and unanimously decided to support GLEB, although there's now little prospect of it going ahead with planned investments involving over 1,000 new jobs — on top of the 3,000 already created in 200 enterprises. Also threatened are GLEB's acclaimed technology networks which link London colleges and teaching hospitals to the development of socially-useful products.

John Rentoul

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Dear Maggie, hold on until 1988, yours Nigel

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

To: the Prime Minister
From: the Chancellor of the Exchequer

I ENCLOSE the final draft of my Budget speech. It is full of phrases like 'the current economic upswing ... best overall performance for a generation ... a springboard for the future'. All that is for public consumption. I am taking this opportunity to tell you what I really think and how this week's Budget fits in with your general election planning.

You told me just before Christmas that you might want to call a snap election this year. We both hoped that unemployment would continue to fall and that I could cut taxes this spring — and we both feared the onset of a new recession next winter. As we are all well aware, there is no sense now in holding an election this year. The Westland fiasco interrupted our recovery in the opinion polls, and the halving of oil prices has left no room for significant tax cuts.

At the same time, our main fear of delaying an election has also evaporated. World trade should remain buoyant for the next two years. Thanks to Sheikh Yamani, the recession of '87 has been postponed. I fully intend to claim the credit for continued growth.

However, just between you and me, I should not. For one thing, we blamed the 1979 rise in oil prices for the 1980-81 recession; logically we cannot say we are responsible when the reverse happens. For another thing, if growth does continue, it will be demand-led: the lower oil prices will increase international spending power. We have spent much of the last seven years claiming that supply factors matter more than demand. Our electoral prospects, however, depend on demand delivering the goods — or, rather, delivering the orders.

I hope next year to be able to announce the kind of tax cuts I was intending to hand out this year. On current projections, we should have £2 billion to give away next spring. Indeed, with luck, more may be available. A word of warning, however. This is my third Budget — and the third time I have promised major tax cuts *next* year. These are my promises — and this is my record so far (figures in £ billions):

	Tax cuts promised in ...			
	1984	1985	1986	Actual tax cuts
1985/6	2			0.7
1986/7	4.5	3.5		0.9
1987/8	3.5	3	2	
1988/9		3	4	

As you can see, it is a sorry tale. If my 1984 plans had worked out, we should have had a total of £6.5 billion of tax cuts by now — instead the total is £1.6 billion. And the hopes of further cuts in 1987/8 have had to be scaled down. My original target of £10 billion worth of tax cuts between 1985 and 1988 has been reduced by two thirds.

Mind you, that £4 billion earmarked for the 1988 Budget looks promising — and you don't need to call an election until June of that year. If I'm still Chancellor (and you're still Prime Minister), have a word with me before you decide on the date of a dissolution: it might be worth holding on for the full five years to which we're entitled.

WHILE WE are still on the economic arithmetic, I plan to say very little about monetary policy. The reason is simple. We are — how can I put this? — in an ongoing tail-between-the-legs situation.

As you will recall, our original idea when we won power in 1979 was that control of the money supply, and specifically M3, should be the cornerstone of our economic policy.

PETER KELLNER

It has turned out to be a disaster. Our policy led initially to startling interest rates and a hugely overvalued pound — and we still failed to control the damned thing. Last spring we set targets of 5-9 per cent for the financial year now ending and 4-8 per cent for 1986-87. The actual out-turn for this year will be 15 per cent. It we were to get back on course, there should be no M3 growth at all over the next 12 months. Instead I am *doubling* our target growth rate, to 11-15 per cent — and I'm not bothering to set any targets at all for next year. Let's hope that not too many people notice my final burial of monetarism.

(Incidentally, if you are worried about the reaction of Tory backbenchers, don't be. They have started to wise up. In 1983, according to MORI's annual polls of MPs, 85 per cent of Tory backbenchers approved of 'control of the money supply as the main tool of economic policy'. By 1984 it was down to 72 per cent, and by last summer to just 46 per cent. If you want to know what our chaps really think, the current issue of MORI's *British Public Opinion* has the details. An annual subscription costs £50; write to 32 Old Queen Street, London SW1H 9HP.)

So much for the economics. Now to the take-home pound in voters' pockets. I have seen off those moaning minnies who throught we should help the low-paid most. Instead I am cutting the standard rate of income tax by 1p in the £.

This means that the bigger the income, the more that cut is worth. I have tried to throw Labour off-guard by clawing back a little from the very highest-paid. The Treasury has produced tables showing that people earning £30,000 start to lose out. But don't worry too much. The table omits things like mortgage allowances, company pension schemes and other tax shelters. The chances of anyone earning less than £50,000 a year losing more than they gain are remote.

Politically, the more important issue is how the great majority of 'our people' fare — those on £200-400 a week. The answer is: very nicely, thank you. You will recall that child benefit is only rising by 10p this summer and quite a few of our MPs squealed. Well, the Treasury has done some sums for the impact of the tax, national insurance and child benefit changes on families with two children at different levels of income. Assuming a 7 per cent rise in *gross* income, this is that will happen to *net* income:

Current weekly wage £	Rise in gross pay %	Rise in net pay %
70	7.0	5.8
100	7.0	6.3
160	7.0	7.0
200	7.0	7.3
300	7.0	7.6
400	7.0	7.6

As you can see, we are clobbering the low-paid; acting neutrally towards a family on an average £160 a week (my tax cut just offsets the impact of our assault on the real value of child benefits); and ensuring that above-average income families have a rise in take-home pay which is bigger, in percentage terms, than their rise in gross pay.

Finally, I should draw your attention to a little wheeze in my speech. I shall be announcing something called a 'Personal Equity Plan' and talking about 'a dramatic extension of share ownership'. In fact it is designed to be of greatest help to people on high tax rates who already own shares. For them, it will help that they can reinvest dividends and take capital gains tax free. But people paying standard rate tax and not owning shares will find little benefit from the new scheme. They would do just as well investing in a monthly unit trust scheme — which they can do already.

I thought I ought to make that clear in case you feared the riff-raff starting to own shares and turning up to heckle Denis at an annual general meeting of one of his companies. No chance. He and his friends (and their drinking habits) will be safe as long as I am Chancellor. □

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BYE BYE GLC

Stefano Cagnoni/Report

High summer — Battersea Park packed out for the GLC Jobs Year Festival of July '85. Billy Bragg on the platform, 250,000 in the crowd

HILARY WAINWRIGHT writes an *ave atque vale* for Livingstone's County Hall

London

THE GLC is being abolished because of its socialism. We have Norman Tebbit's word for it. He calls it 'the Labour Party's new divisive version of socialism'. We cannot take his word for *that*. So what kind of socialism(s) *has* the GLC been about?

The present GLC, like other Labour GLCs, has been redistributive. But in a new way. Not only has it used the rates from the City, business and the rich boroughs to provide for the less well off. It has also dared to use this rate base to help sustain the resistance and self-organisation of those whom Thatcherism is trying to break.

As a result, Tory councils have faced GLC-funded campaigns against their privatisation schemes; City managers find their clerical workers getting organised with the help of a City based resource centre, funded by the GLC; the Metropolitan Police have faced constant exposure from 'Police Monitoring Committees' once more funded by the GLC; and the government's prize quango, the London Docklands Development Corporation, finds that all its smoothly packaged plans for turning Docklands into a property developer's delight are constantly disrupted by community campaigns — again funded by the GLC.

Equally infuriating to Tebbit and his ilk must be the GLC's ability to make life happier for a wide cross-section of people and in doing so win immense popular support. Music in the parks for old age pensioners, access for the disabled to the South Bank, festivals for all the family. None of these are without their political message.

'Whatever the problems are, instead of trying to do it for the people, they provided support for people to do it for themselves.' Pete Marshall, a trade union official in Health Emergency, another GLC funded campaign, summed up a common theme in GLC politics. This idea of sharing power, however implicit, marks an important break from the Fabian view of the socialist state, in both its strong and weak versions. The Fabian view of the state as professionals acting *for* working-class people and therefore apart from them, has dominated and increasingly, by its mistrust of the initiatives and desires of ordinary people, discredited the Labour Party.

The GLC does not provide a ready-made alternative model; only some important experiences from which to learn. We cannot learn from it if we mythologise it. Its novel use of public resources has grown not out of a conscious strategy but the openness and encouraging rhetoric of leading councillors, and the well developed demands of established popular movements.

BUT THIS SHARING of power and democratisation has been limited in important ways. The whole process depends on an alliance between political power within County Hall and an active, rooted constituency. Such an alliance involves a complete reversal of the traditional role of County Hall. There has been a lot of learning from mistakes, especially in relation to grants.

A basic problem in the grants programme concerns the tension between a group's autonomy — which is also the source of its strength — and the local authority's policy commitments. In theory groups are being funded as part of a policy, not simply out of charitable concern. This involves some kind of political partnership with the local authority. The GLC's need to monitor and work with organisations raised the tricky question of how far the local authority should intervene in, for instance, trade union and community organisations.

In a sense by the very act of providing support it is playing an active role. Unless it lays down conditions concerning, for instance, equal opportunities and representation, its funding could help to perpetuate a lack of democracy.

The question of how active a role the local authority should play with trades unions is raised in the case of the GLC's internal regime. The present GLC has radically improved the conditions of its staff, especially white collar. However, those improvements have not been part of a wider strategy to create an alliance between the Labour Group and the workforce to transform the administration. Consequently the present GLC has not made a real challenge to the hierarchical and stifling management system in most of the mainstream departments.

There is a formal structure for industrial democracy, but to most workers it *is* a mere formality, if they know about it at all. Councillors are unwilling to do anything other than through the established union procedures, which, at the GLC, are generally conservative. The result is a stark contradiction between the external democratisation and the internal regime.

There is, however, an example in Sheffield of politicians actively promoting a trade union input into improving and expanding services. Staff from the employment department are working with groups of trade unionists on proposals for municipalisation.

They are showing that an active political involvement in the unions can be achieved to

Red Ken...abolition...Met Counties to go...'lesbians on rates'...voluntary sector panics...media trash wo

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the benefit of jobs and services so long as it does not interfere with wage bargaining. But it requires the politicians to see their relationship with the unions as a political rather than a managerial one.

The most disastrous instance of a breakdown in the alliance between politicians and a popular constituency was over the ratecapping 'campaign'. On this issue the left in the Labour Group behaved as if the popular constituency they had built up over particular policies could be turned overnight into a stage army, left ignorant in the wings. *All* the left of the County Hall Labour Group are implicated in this, Ken Livingstone as much as John McDonnell, and by our silence, officers like myself.

They all knew that they could not deliver the GLC in support of the agreed policy of not making a rate, especially since the GLC was required to set a precept by a certain date, well before the others would be under pressure. For the sake of keeping up appearances of strength, hoping absurdly to bluff the government, they ran the campaign based on a lie. It would have been better to be honest about the situation and support the boroughs in whatever way was possible. In the event not only did the ratecapping issue never become a focus for action but its collapse seriously undermined the campaign against abolition.

The lesson I draw from all of this is that where the GLC members were influenced mainly by the radical community and trade union base from which some of them came they contributed to a genuinely popular practice and vision of socialism. However, where they engaged in games of parliamentary bluff, using their popular constituency passively as a card they could never play, they reverted to type and became like any other group of local authority politicians: secretive, manipulative, fractious and in the end defeated.

In that sense Tebbit was wrong to imply that the new socialism of the GLC belonged simply to the Labour Party. Of course it was through the Labour Party that it gained access to real resources and political authority. But its ideas and practice developed because some Labour Councillors, some of the time, had the courage to break out of traditional parliamentary politics and to put real resources behind the politics which had grown up outside.

The question posed by abolition is can local Labour parties fill the gap which will be left and create — politically if not with the material resources — the sorts of alliances with community and workplace struggles which the GLC achieved at its best? □

Hilary Wainwright works for the GLC Popular Planning Unit and is a member of the Socialist Society.

'. . . IN THE EARTH . . .'

A HISTORIC ANTAGONISM

Labour MEP STAN NEWENS on the eternal tale of Executive hostility to Londoners' freedoms

A THOUSAND YEARS ago Alfred the Great recognised the outstanding potential importance of London and determined to separate it from the Kingdom of Mercia, to which it had belonged. In 886 AD he appointed Ethelred, chief earldorman of Mercia, as governor, subtly bringing the city under his direct responsibility. One of his successors, Edward the Elder, put it fully under the control of the Crown of England. Henceforward, century after century, the sovereign authority has always tended to be jealous of London. The clash which has led to the abolition of the GLC by the present government has a long and distinguished pedigree: it is unlikely in the extreme that the present Conservative government has seen it permanently off the scene.

Even before the Norman Conquest, London on several occasions helped choose its next ruler. In 1013 it yielded to the Danes and accepted King Sweyn. In 1035 the seamen of London backed Earl Leofric in choosing King Harold I (1036-1040). In 1042 when Edward the Confessor was proclaimed king by popular acclamation, London was again a key force. In 1066 William the Conqueror proceeded circumspectly and granted the City a charter as soon as it accepted his accession, but one of his first decisions was to build on the site of what became the Tower, to enforce his writ. He was undoubtedly responsible for blocking further development towards what might have become a 'free' and independent city.

Under Henry II and his son Richard I, in the second half of the 12th century, Londoners tried in vain to gain the right to form a Commune — an association of citizens bound by oath to their city, with power to appoint their own officers. Seeking to establish his right to succeed his brother, John in 1191

Mary Evans Picture Library

An earlier people's darling, John Wilkes

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conceded, with the Commune, the right of the City to choose its own mayor. In 1215 under pressure from the Barons to sign Magna Carta he confirmed London's right to choose its mayor. During the mid-13th century civil war London's craftworkers supported Simon de Montfort against Henry III. After the Peasants Revolt seizure of the City in 1381 Richard II's treatment of the craftworkers caused such hatred that they welcomed his overthrow by Henry Bolingbroke — later Henry IV. Under the Tudors in the 16th century London became steadily more subservient to the Crown. In Henry VIII's later years royal officials actually chose the mayor.

In Elizabeth's time the City gradually went Puritan. Royal reluctance to get rid of theatres and actors plus resentment at the granting of monopolies and other rights by letters patent, which ignored the City's authority, gradually produced a very rebellious London which became the spearhead of the revolt against the Stuart monarchs in the next century.

In 1637 London's refusal to pay ship money, for which John Hampden is particularly remembered, was on the grounds that it infringed the liberties of the City. Charles I's close adviser and friend, the Earl of Strafford — later sent to the block — advised Charles: 'Sire, you will never do good to those citizens of London till you have made an example of some of the aldermen. Unless you hang up some of them, you will do no good with them.'

Every stratagem was used by anti-royalist forces to increase London's independence from the king. When Charles I resolved to take a troop of soldiers to the House of Commons to arrest the five Members — Pym (*ancestor of today's Francis Pym*), Hampden, Holles, Heselrige and Strode — who were leading the opposition to him, it was to the City that they fled, where he was powerless to compel their surrender. A week later they returned in triumph to the Commons. Charles I's inability to suppress the City ultimately led to the overthrow of the Stuart monarchy.

In the 18th century, London continued to defend its independence against the Crown and Parliament alike. As the Webbs put it: 'The City was proud of the fact that in the days when the House of Commons was anything but a representative assembly, the Court of Common Council furnished the most prominent platform for the expression of the popular will'. (*Local Government: the Manor and Borough II p.653*). London was an opponent of Walpole's Excise Bill. It opposed the war with America. It supported John Wilkes in his opposition to George I and, in due course, chose him as sheriff, Lord Mayor, and Chamberlain.

In the 19th century, London government underwent a metamorphosis in recognition of the huge expansion which had taken place beyond the original City boundaries. The formation of the Metropolitan Board of Works in 1855, its assumption of responsibility over the Fire Brigade in 1866, and finally the formation of the London County Council in 1889, which took over the powers of a number of ad hoc boards, marked the emergence of a new concept of London. The City Corporation survived all the changes, but its historic role as the custodian of the rights of Londoners against central government passed to the LCC and, in due course, to the GLC.

Despite the vast constitutional changes which have affected both, central government has retained a jealousy of any challenge of its power from an authority based upon the capital, which remains the largest urban area in Britain today. Under Mrs Thatcher, the attempt made so many times previously to deny London its own voice — today based on the democratic vote of all its citizens — has been made once again. Like all those attempts which have preceded it over the past 1000 years, it will fail; and in the not-too-distant future, with the forthcoming change at national level, London's own local authority will once again be restored.

No other capital in Europe is today denied its own municipal form of government, and the roots that go so far back into the history of our people will once again produce a Greater London Council of which all true Londoners can again be proud.

Stan Newens is MEP for London Central.

PARALLEL CASE

US'S CRUSHED CAPITAL

The extreme Western world example of the disenfranchised capital, historically run under the direct rule of its own 'Westminster', the US Congress, is Washington. And look at the condition of affairs there. CLAUDIA WRIGHT reports

WASHINGTON, in the District of Columbia, has just about everything a civilised city of the world requires — a gleaming, relatively noiseless subway system, the world's most popular museum (the National Aeronautic and Space Museum), a surplus of luxury hotel suites, specialty dealers in French wine futures, a Convention Centre, an annual flower show, and a symphony orchestra conducted by a Russian defector who is paid more than any other symphony conductor in the United States. As a movie-making centre, Washington now earns more than $35 million a year to provide settings for film crews to shoot.

Washington also has the highest infant mortality rate in the US — just a percentage point or two ahead of Cuba and Bulgaria, but lagging well behind Greece and Spain. Residents of the District can look forward to the shortest average life expectancy of residents of any American State — shorter even than average life expectancy in Lebanon. The literacy and numeracy scores of children in the District school system are far inferior to those of children in the surrounding suburbs. The proportion of households living below the poverty line is one of the highest in the country.

The city prison system is so over-crowded at the moment a court has ordered the District government to stop filling the existing prison space, establish more cells or send condemned prisoners to serve out their sentences in private prisons wherever they can be found across State borders. A week ago, Pennsylvania went to court to turn back a busload of District of Columbia prisoners on the road to a private prison near Pittsburgh.

At about the same time, an independent committee established in 1980 to monitor the District's compliance with a court decree to provide adequate services to mentally-ill residents reported to the US District Court that services were still woeful. The committee found that city welfare agencies were dumping the indigent and mentally-ill onto the already over-crowded and under-financed shelters for the homeless, where community organizers have had to undergo two near-fatal hunger strikes to get the Federal government to agree to provide more shelter space.

The reason for this contrasting state of affairs is that the District of Columbia is the wealthiest, best policed and calmest Bantustan in the entire world. Almost 70 per cent of District residents are Black, and while the District government and the mayoralty are democratically elected by the residents, the District remains dependent on the Federal government and the US Congress for a large part of its revenues and capital resources.

In population the District is more numerous than four other States — Alaska, Wyoming, Vermont and Delaware — and it pays more taxes into the US Treasury than seven other States. And yet, precisely because the District is Black, and would be certain to send two Black senators and a Black representative to Congress, it continues to be politically disenfranchised in the nation.

In the 19th century, it was Congress that revoked the initial system of local elections and home rule. It took the Congress until 1964 before District residents were even permitted to vote for the President. In 1971 Congress allowed a delegate to be elected to Congress but he or she can only vote in committee, not on the floor of the House. Until 1974 the real power in the District was in the hands of a white supremacist from South Carolina who was chair of the House District of Columbia Committee. Now the chair and four other members of the committee of 11 are Black. Congress voted in 1978 to approve a Constitutional Amendment granting the District full parliamentary representation — but it failed to be ratified by the States.

Lack of political power can often be corrupting. It has to be admitted that Washington's local government is probably no more corrupt than US cities of similar size and resources, but the last two deputy mayors have resigned office in the wake of investigations and the first of them, a close aide and friend of the mayor, is now in jail.

The mayor's critics among District residents have blamed him for encouraging speculative real estate development that has almost destroyed the rent control system and is driving Black residents into Maryland and Virginia.

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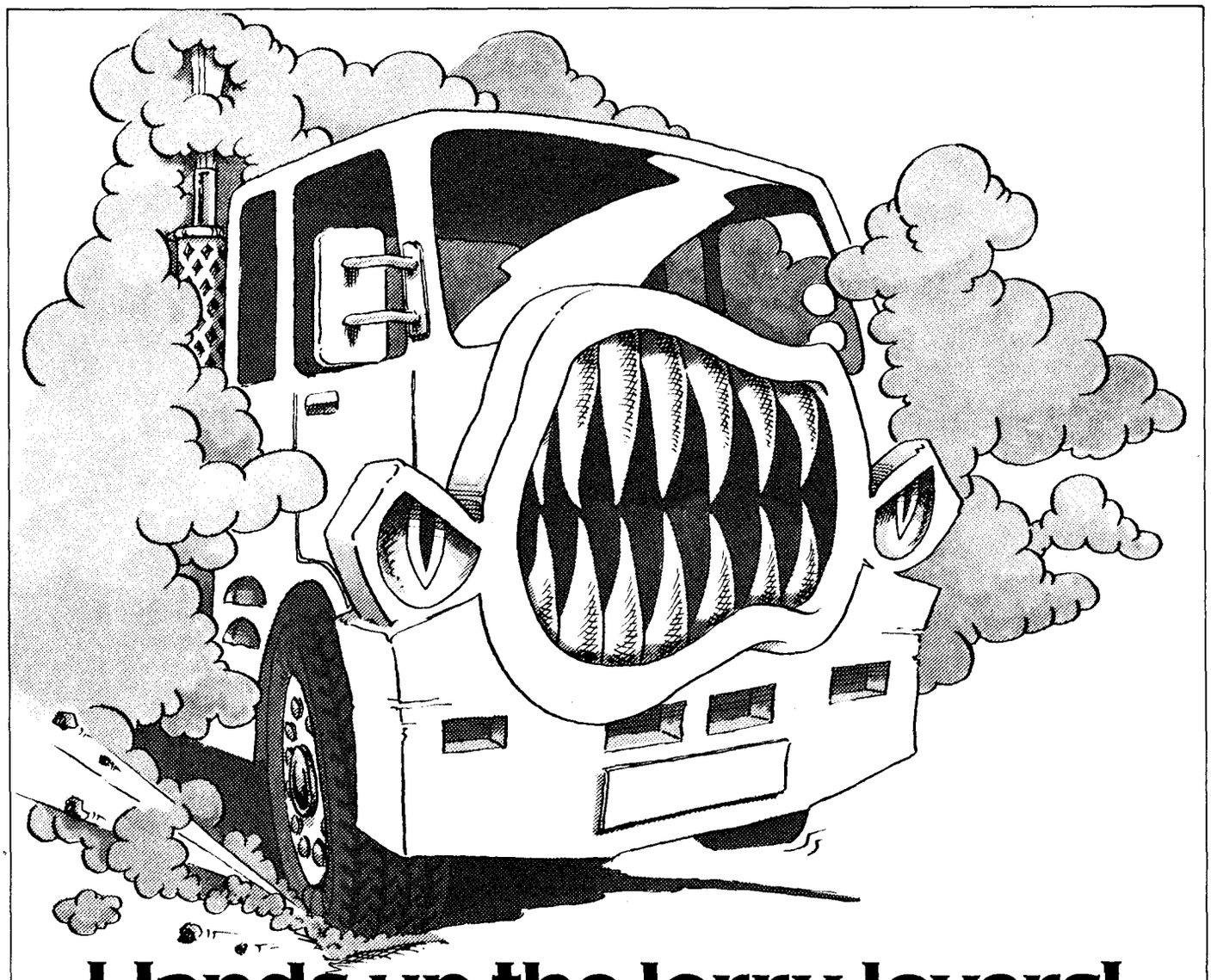

Hands up the lorry lovers!

There can't be many people who love lorries. They even seem to irritate other drivers.

So why are they thundering through our cities, polluting the atmosphere, deafening us, causing untold damage to our homes, roads and what lies beneath the roads? Does it have to be like this?

The simple answer is that we've hardly ever made the issue a political priority. One of the reasons we have so much road freight today is because we axed thousands of miles of railway in the sixties. We raised the maximum lorry weight to 32 tonnes in 1964. The theory was that this meant fewer, bigger lorries. It didn't, yet the weight was raised again to 38 tonnes in 1983.

And now the EEC wants us to raise the limit to 40 tonnes. It's a vicious, motorised circle, with people as its victims.

Other countries have come closer to curbing the excesses of lorry traffic. Many countries ban lorries in their towns at weekends and on public holidays. Both Paris and Stockholm keep them off the roads for at least eight hours a day. And the GLC effected a night-time and weekend lorry ban earlier this year.

But the future of this is doubtful in some boroughs after GLC abolition. What will your borough do?

We need to get the issue on the political agenda. Which is yet another reason why Friends of the Earth has launched a Cities for People campaign. So that we can help restore the balance and let Londoners respond to the undoubted power of the road lobby.

We have prepared an information pack about the 'Cities for People' campaign. It contains facts that will shock you – though you already half-know them from the evidence of your ears and eyes. And it presents the alternatives we all need to consider if our cities are to be worth living in.

Send for it today and get involved in the campaign for a better, safer London.

Cities are for people, not juggernauts.

THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS PART OF THE 'CITIES FOR PEOPLE' INFORMATION CAMPAIGN.

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lumps Jenkin...QUALGOS mushroom...Black groups' fears...Sheffield fares soar...Law centres at risk...Hall

VANDALS AT LARGE

ENDANGERED ART SPECIES

SIMON CRINE on the abolition assault on the arts

CELEBRATING six months in his new job, the Arts Minister, Richard Luce, attacked the 'doom and gloom merchants' who had predicted a crisis after the abolition of the GLC and the metropolitan counties. Far from 'Armageddon' for the arts after 1 April, he forecast that they would continue to thrive. After all, the Arts Council would have more money to spend and the South Bank would be in safe hands. Up to a point, he was right. The arts face severe problems in Liverpool and London, especially community and Black arts, but everywhere else deals are being put together which should ensure the future of organisations great and small.

From a low base, Greater Manchester Council has doubled its spending on the performing and visual arts and film over the ten years of its life. Apart from providing solid support for august institutions like the Halle Orchestra, it backed the creation of the Royal Exchange Theatre in 1977 and set up the Cornerhouse Contemporary Arts Centre. The Arts Council, with a little negotiating skill and local knowledge from its regional partner, North West Arts, has put up £1.1m and persuaded the ten districts which make up Greater Manchester to channel £800,000 through a joint committee which they have set up under the act abolishing the Council. Practically all arts organisations in Manchester can look forward to another twelve months (although there are no guarantees after that), and the picture looks much the same in Tyne and Wear, West and South Yorkshire and the West Midlands.

Does this mean that the arts never had anything to fear from abolition? Not a bit of it. If the arts had not begun to shout from the very first moment that the government decided to abolish the upper-tier authorities, there would have been a crisis. Originally just £16 million of replacement funding was offered. It took the Arts Council a suspiciously long time to go public on what it thought was really needed after abolition but, when finally it did, last summer, it argued that the arts needed not less than £35m. of revenue support and £46m. if capital projects were included. Large-scale closures would have followed. The Halle really would have been in deep trouble. The arts' great achievement last year, and a tribute to the persuasive powers of writers, directors, actors, musicians and artists, was to get the money increased by over a half to £25 million.

Abolition casualties, however, have already occurred. The first came in November, when the Arts Council declared that under no circumstances would it abandon its custom of not supporting receiving houses (theatres and concert halls which do not originate their own work but which buy in productions) and would not therefore be able to help Sadler's Wells, the Philharmonic Hall and the Empire in Liverpool, the Theatre Royal in Newcastle and the Empire in Sunderland — this despite its extremely expensive agreement to take over the South Bank, a complex of receiving houses if ever there was one.

After a spell in the cold, the two theatres in the north east have secured replacement funding from Newcastle and Sunderland councils, the Liverpool Empire has been sold to a commercial bidder and a fifth of the staff made redundant and the Philharmonic Hall has been made safe for the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra by the strange expedient of jacking up the rent they pay for it.

Finally, Sadler's Wells has secured a stay of execution by picking up sponsorship from a competitor for British Telecom — but it still has over £100,000 to find.

AND OTHERS are now worried. The one area where there has been no agreement between the Arts Council and the district councils is Liverpool. The arts need £1.6m. to survive, of which the Arts Council is prepared to offer about £1m. The problem is that nobody there believes the districts will come up with anything like the difference. An optimistic estimate yields about half the required sum and assumes that Liverpool will contribute very little.

The Everyman and the Playhouse, which already enjoy some Arts Council funding as well as support from Merseyside County Council, have been assured that they will get what they need but their fear must be that if overall agreement is not reached one of them will be sacrificed. A further 20 arts organisations, funded solely by Merseyside, have warned that they will close soon after 1 April unless agreement is reached. They range from the Bluecoat Society of Arts, through an exciting dance company, Spiral, to Merseyside Young People's Theatre.

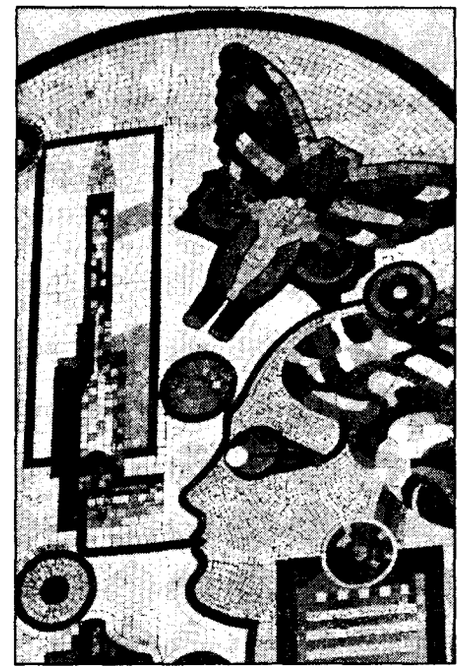
The other area of major concern is London. The Arts Council and the Greater London Arts Association are telling anyone who will listen that all will be well; they have, however, yet to give arts organisations firm indications of what they can expect after 1 April. The Almeida Theatre is a good example: a week from the beginning of the new financial year, the Arts Council won't show its hand, while Islington Council asks why it should be expected to pick up the tab for a London-wide arts facility.

The GLC was the most innovative and adventurous funder of all the upper-tier authorities and its main advances were in the community arts, where it spent £2.7m. last year, and in the Black arts, where it spent £1.7m., starting from virtually nothing five years ago.

The GLC went where the Arts Council would not go and where Greater London Arts could not afford to go. If there is not enough money to go around after 1 April, it is certain that the first to be saved will be those already in receipt of Arts Council funding and the first to go will be those who flourished under GLC funding. Bad news for the 90 Black arts organisations which the GLC funded on its own. □

DELIGHTS OF TRANSPORT

BEAUTY TO THE PEOPLE



Edouardo Paolozzi

JULES LUBBOCK asks who'll brighten life now for the pedestrians?

GROTS OF COAGULATED soot sticking to the cast-iron plates of spiral staircases like unswept flues; windy, sewer-like underpasses lined with once-white tile, now as cracked and ingrained as dirty fingernails; escalator shafts smeared with a waxy brown slime; lift-shafts full of litter: these are just a few of the nauseous discomforts Londoners suffer when they travel by tube.

No wonder those who can afford to use their cars whenever possible, and those who cannot travel on foot or by bike. The GLC's greatest contribution to the revival of public transport was to realise that it had to compete with the car, not simply on price, which it always can, or speed or reliability, but also on comfort and quality of experience. Who would willingly have their senses assaulted after the cinema or returning from work when they could sit in a warm car listening to the stereo?

Although reduced fares were the first public effect of the GLC's policy in 1981, a ten-year programme for re-adorning the tube stations was also initiated, the results of which are just appearing.

History, however, is already being rewritten. Edouardo Paolozzi's brilliant mosaics at Tottenham Court Road are the subject of an exhibition at that bastion of private art — the Royal Academy. The GLC is nowhere mentioned, although it was responsible throughout. In typical RA fashion, the exhibition is 'sponsored' by S. Pearson — Lord Cowdray's publicly quoted family investment trust — in such a way that many a visitor may get the misleading

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The British Academy Awards (based on designs by Mary Gandy)

BEST LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMME
Victoria Wood as seen on TV

BEST DRAMA SERIES/SERIAL
Edge of Darkness

BEST FACTUAL SERIES
Forty Minutes

BEST ACTOR
Bob Peck
(Edge of Darkness)

BEST COMEDY SERIES
Only Fools and Horses

BEST ACTRESS
Claire Bloom
(Shadowlands)

BEST CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME ENTERTAINMENT/DRAMA
Grange Hill

FLAHERTY DOCUMENTARY AWARD
Leonard Bernstein's
West Side Story (Omnibus)

FILM SOUND
Edge of Darkness

VTR EDITOR
Graham Taylor
(Blott on the Landscape)

BEST SINGLE DRAMA
Shadowlands

COSTUME DESIGN
Michael Burdle
(Bleak House)

FILM CAMERAMAN
Andrew Dunn
(Edge of Darkness)

BEST NEWS OR OUTSIDE BROADCAST COVERAGE
Live Aid

BEST ORIGINAL TELEVISION MUSIC
Eric Clapton/Michael Kamen
(Edge of Darkness)

DESIGN
Tim Harvey
(Bleak House)

BEST LIGHT ENTERTAINMENT PERFORMANCE
Victoria Wood
(Victoria Wood as seen on TV)

FILM EDITOR
Ardan Fisher Dan Rae
(Edge of Darkness)

1985 TV AWARD FOR ORIGINALITY
Bob Geldof

MAKE UP
Lisa Westcott
(Bleak House)

BEST CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME DOCUMENTARY/ EDUCATIONAL
Timmy's Story

Once again, heads have gone to our success.

It isn't only TV audiences that are giving our programmes high ratings.

They are achieving high ratings amongst the professionals too.

Two weeks ago we picked up 11 of the 12 awards presented by the Broadcasting Press Guild.

Above you see the glittering prizes that The British Academy of Film and Television Arts has just presented to our programme makers.

Of the 29 awards given for television, BBC teams picked up 21.

An impressive score, we're sure you'll agree.

The BBC

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impression that it paid for the mosaics.

In fact Paolozzi's scheme is the most imaginative public patronage of the arts since the war. The triumphal entrance is through a pair of mosaic-covered triple arches at the top of the escalators. At the bottom one passes through a circular lobby lined with colourful images: tape-decks, sound synthesisers, mechanical chickens — all the paraphernalia of hi-fi and junk food above the ground. There are more sinister images: a cat wired up for some frightful experiment; Leonardo's cross-section of the brain rewired with microchips; a running man sandwiched between a primitive mask from the British Museum and Picasso's 'Three Musicians'.

On the central sections of each platform are more masks and saxaphones representing the old ethnography department at the BM and Soho jazz clubs. Most evocative of all is a fat and brilliantly coloured moth which flutters before one, sometimes all alone on the arched entrances to the subways, sometimes floating in and out of the packed friezes.

This is more than mere decoration; it transforms the old dingy confusion of tunnels and escalators into an ordered labyrinth to which the images seem to provide the key, as well as a sensuous and Byzantine experience of abstract irridescent patterns of glass.

But why have 'NO PRAM' notices been stuck on the escalator mosaics? Why have bulky lighting tubes been run in front of the images? And why have the connecting passages been lined with crude 'Habitat' tiling? Where else but in Britain would an organisation employ a leading international artist and then treat his work with such philistine insensitivity? Perhaps the administrators just love the old grot. All the same, where else in the world, other than Moscow, can you enjoy a great environmental masterpiece on the underground?

Of the other reconditioned stations, I prefer the restoration to their high Victorian glory — down to the mahogany cupboards for the fire buckets — of the brick-lined arches at Baker Street and Paddington on the old Metropolitan Line of 1863, the first line of all. What about restoring the *New Statesman*'s very own station at Farringdon Road, which was originally the end of that line?

In contrast, Tyneside's new Metro, opened in 1984, another Metropolitan County initiative threatened by abolition, sticks to the uniform, modern, public service style established by Frank Pick and Charles Holden in London in the 1920s. It has never been bettered: red trains with emerald green interiors, pale yellow tiles in the subways creating a warm and calming atmosphere, polished brass handrails and oak-panelled escalators with brass fitting and upstanding tungsten lights. A major regret is that these escalators are being replaced by stainless steel ones which glare in the harsh fluorescent light and show every scratch and stain.

London Transport should restore the best of the old — the Victorian stations; the Art Nouveau ones on the Northern with their arched ticket windows in green tiles; the Holden-Pick ones — while an occasional scrub and a coat of bright paint on those spiral staircases would not come amiss. What chance of this when the ten-year modernisation programme funded by the GLC in 1981 comes to an end? I don't see S Pearson or another Friends of the Royal Academy coughing up for it. □

An AMA Guide
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END OF AN OLD SONG

THE ASSAULT ON ELITISM

ANDREW CLEMENTS walks the GLC's South Bank

THERE CAN BE no doubt that the face of the South Bank concert hall has been changed out of all recognition by the GLC over the last five years, almost entirely, I think, for the better. Those who remember the bleak expanses of the Festival and Queen Elizabeth Halls in the late 1970s, the desultory exhibitions and desperate catering, must have registered the drastic improvement. While some of the innovations and displays have become rather strident as the date of decolonisation has drawn nearer, it seems most unlikely that the essence of the GLC's open-foyer policy will be abandoned by the new board of management.

Many more people now visit the Festival Hall than in its years of austerity, when it seemed to have changed little from its beginnings in the 1950s, though whether still it attracts many from outside the concert-going middle classes I somehow doubt. All the shops and bars do a good trade, though the effectiveness of the recently opened Bookspace where the expensively mediocre restaurant used to be is dubious. An uneasy hybrid between seminar room, exhibition space and leftist book shop it appears consciously impermanent, as if set up to give the new authority something that could be painlessly dismantled.

All this, though is cosmetic and hardly impinges upon the cultural core of the halls. Most of the GLC's plans to broaden their profile have come to naught — the rumours that abounded a few years ago, such as the idea of transforming the Purcell Room into a multi-ethnic centre, have generated no substance. Fun days and occasional weekend festivals have been introduced — the combination of the GLC and the London Sinfonietta in the 'Responses' weekends, where contemporary-music concerts and lectures are offered free (the latest one begins today) is potentially the most exciting new venture, but even that has arrived late in the day.

Certainly the programming of the symphony orchestras in the Festival Hall has flirted with populism in recent seasons,but that is as much the result of market forces and competition from the Barbican Centre as of any insistence on broadening appeal that might have come from the halls themselves. So while the Festival Hall has become a more civilised environment in which to hear music, if offers almost precisely the same fare it did a decade ago, and from that point of view any changes which the new administrators might make will be long overdue.

The new hierarchy seems to an outsider a mixture of the crass and the intelligent. It is a good idea to separate the financial and artistic managment of the complex and to have appointed someone with a proven ability to control adventurous programmes as head of artistic affairs. Nicholas Snowman began his career by founding the London Sinfonietta; he was then invited to Paris by Pierre Boulez to run the Institut de Recherche Acoustique-Musique (IRCAM) that lurks beneath the Pompidou Centre and which has been responsible for some of the most far-reaching advances in electro-acoustic and computer-controlled music in the last five years. His brief on the South Bank will be much wider, but I would be surprised if he will be willing to follow the *laissez-faire* attitude to the co-ordination of concerts that prevails at the moment.

The Barbican may have come in for some criticism for the lack of adventure and frank commercialism of some of its programmes, but there is no doubt that at the same time it has put together some of London's most significant musical events over recent seasons, such as the Webern and Stockhausen festivals, as well as the two Mahler/Vienna seasons and the forthcoming Bernstein celebration. At the Barbican, though, one orchestra dominates (the LSO), while five independents use the Festival Hall. Getting them to co-operate in a similar venture will be difficult — it has never succeeded in the past — though, if they could be persuaded of the commercial advantages, they might just respond. Certainly Snowman will also want to enliven contemporary music, continuing along the path the Sinfonietta has begun to tread: where the money comes from for these innovations is another matter.

When the new plans for the South Bank were first announced the Arts Council made great play with the board of management, which had been appointed from the great and good of London music and included Lorin Maazel, Jessye Norman and the ubiquitous Andrew Lloyd Webber. It's difficult to view those appointments as anything but window dressing; whatever their expertise in managing concert halls (severely limited in most cases I would have thought) it's hard to imagine them finding much time to devote to bread-and-butter policy decisions. I suspect that Snowman's powers will be considerable, and that the illuminati will content themselves with wielding the rubber stamp. But whether he will have the resources and goodwill to implement any of his plans remains to be seen. □

Red Ken...abolition...Met Counties to go...'lesbians on rates'...voluntary sector panics...media [illegible]

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MEDIA

A'n't we in a thriving state?

PHILLIP WHITEHEAD

THE DAWN OF the Enterprise Culture was obscured this week by other events more likely to sell newspapers. Flame-haired Fergie was about to make an honest man of Randy Andy. Few papers were entirely free of the Member for Saddleworth whose oleaginous homilies on morality distracted Westminster in Budget Week. Had he received formal censure rather than informal contempt he might have been able to hog Budget Day itself. As the wags say, Dickens thinks that he is a character out of Pecksniff. But when he was ushered offstage, protesting loudly that it wasn't every day he got up a lynch party, the Chancellor was able to introduce his budget. There was an echo of the other Dickens in this unashamed hand-out to the better-off at the expense of the poor. The tone resembled that of Mr M'Choakamchild, addressing Sissy Jupe:

> 'Now this schoolroom is a nation. And in this nation, there are fifty millions of money. Isn't this a prosperous nation? Girl number twenty, isn't this a prosperous nation and a'n't you in a thriving state?'
>
> 'What did you say?' asked Louisa.
>
> 'Miss Louisa, I said I didn't know. I thought I couldn't know whether it was a prosperous nation or not, and whether I was in a thriving state or not, unless I knew who had got the money, and whether any of it was mine. But that had nothing to do with it. It was not in the figures at all,' said Sissy, wiping her eyes.

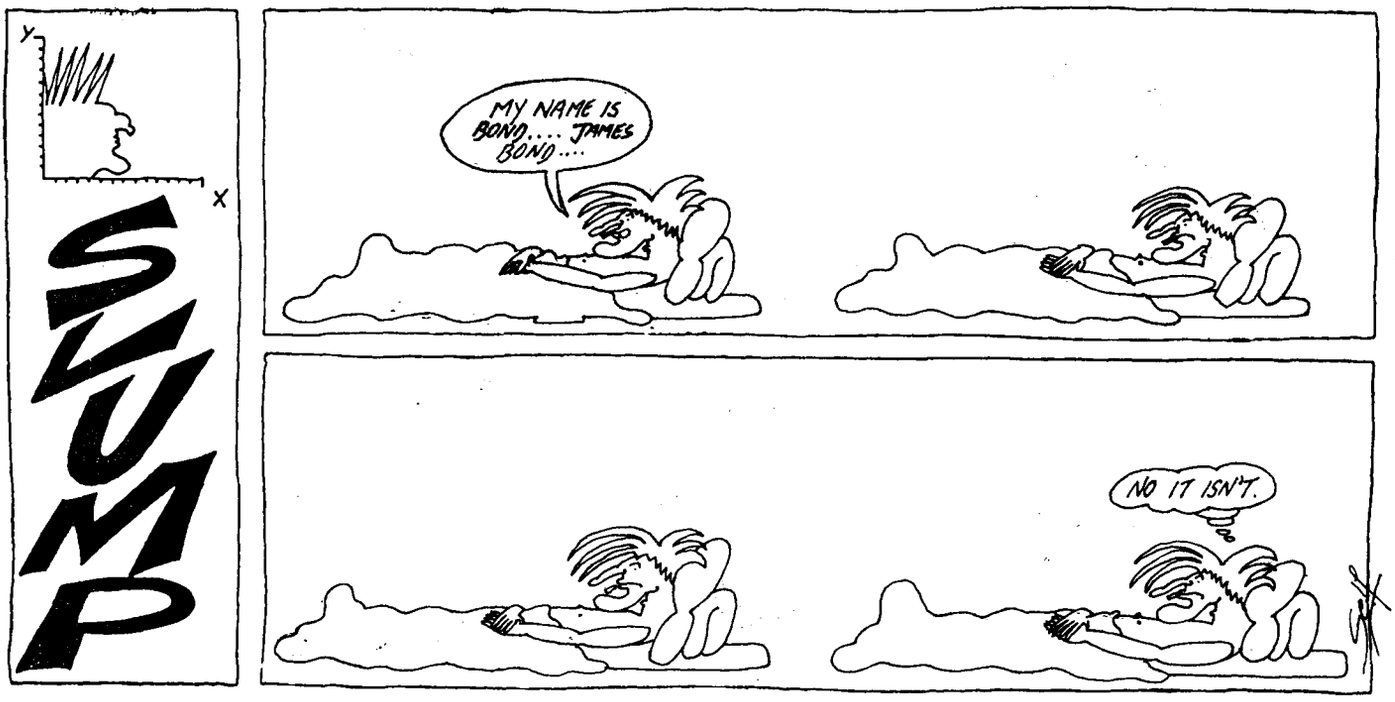
There was a good deal that was not in the figures on Tuesday. But there was no doubt who had got the money. It took the *Financial Times*, amid detailed and generally approving coverage, to point out this Budget will make the Duke of Westminster 'save a minimum of £600 million at a stroke' through the abolition of Capital Transfer Tax. The mere £50,000-a-year man did not do so badly either. Proportionately as well as absolutely he had more to clutch than the family on average earnings. Mr Michael Portillo MP, the next Niglet but three, appeared on every television channel to tell us that we were indeed in a thriving state. So strong were we, quoth Portillo, that the Chancellor had simply shrugged off the recent fall in oil prices. He had shrugged off the poor as well, but this was not something young Portillo had noticed.

How well did the media prepare us for Lawson's budget, and explain it afterwards? There was general agreement that he had a billion to spend. It could buy a penny off the standard rate, but even the *Economist* felt obliged to point out that 'the higher paid would get most'. There were some rash spirits who predicted that the Chancellor might raise more. Mr Adam Raphael had a front-page lead in the *Observer* he will want to forget: 'Lawson to punish City whizz-kids'. 'Soaring City salaries' and 'golden hello' lump sum payments were to be scourged, he reported. On the day, they weren't. Nor were any of the wistful predictions elsewhere of windfall taxes on the banks fulfilled.

Apart from a ritual slap at BES schemes investing in antiques, wine stores or grouse moors, Lawson did nothing that would disturb the reveries of the sleekest City slicker. The bull market can roar on. It is depressing that even those papers which are not entirely temples to Mammon, and which mark and lament the great divide in British society, do not set out the Chancellor's options according to that first priority: how can the gap between rich and poor be closed?

Lawson has the advantage, therefore, that he is never placed in the frame, except by the parliamentary opposition. With skilful presentation a rotten budget, which kids the middle-income earner that he has been the real gainer, and persuades him to forget that above and below him the rich are relatively richer and the poor relatively poorer, can be sold to the public. Some analysis of this was attempted on the day, in television coverage. This is one occasion on which Westminster's ludicrous decision not to be seen by the TV cameras does not matter. The speech is heard without interruption. Both channels carry live reports, with instant graphics and punditry. The anchormen, David Dimbleby and Alastair Burnet, are relaxed and professional. This is the kind of thing they do well; so well that you tend not to ask where their own sympathies are.

Highest exports ever, ministers say, while we become net importers of manufactured goods. For all the higher productivity our manufacturing output is still 5 per cent lower than in 1979. Perhaps the best comment on Lawson's Enterprise Culture came from an ad in the *Daily Mail*, snugly placed among the budget coverage. 'Invest in the lands of rising profits', it says, over a caption for motorbikes, cars, typewriters, hi-fi, whisky and computers. 'Look around your home or office today and you are bound to see a large number of goods made in the Far East. That's why it makes such sense to invest in successful companies in places like Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea . . .' That's where the Lawson hand-outs will go. A'n't we in a thriving state? □



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DIARY

Francis Wheen

You may remember the brief flurry of excitement a couple of weeks ago when the new magazine *Business* (advertising slogan: 'Power & Money Talking') claimed that Ian MacGregor's forthcoming book would reveal how he and Thatcher planned the miners' strike together — and how her nerve failed her at one point during the strike. The story collapsed when MacGregor dismissed it as 'absolute nonsense' and issued what looked like a denial. He said that his book would not claim that the PM lost her nerve 'during the Nacods dispute'; nor would it claim that she 'planned for the coal strike to happen'. Now that I have read the synopsis for MacGregor's book, for which Collins are shelling out £130,000, it's clear that his denial is outrageously disingenuous. In the synopsis he says that Thatcher 'only wavered once'. His outline for chapter nine fills in some details: 'How the Nacods dispute came about — Smith and Cowan's role in it. The government panic — summoned to Number 10. "The fate of this government is in your hands, Mr MacGregor," she said.' As for his denial that she planned for the strike to happen, it's largely a question of how you interpret the world 'plan'. The book starts with an account of a discussion with Thatcher at No 10 in the autumn of 1983. 'We should,' he tells her, 'go for an earlier confrontation rather than a later one.' The synopsis continues:

> 'How can you manage that?' she asked, still looking puzzled. 'It seems you are going to dictate when this strike is going to happen.'
>
> 'You bet your bottom dollar I am,' I told her. '. . . I would suggest if you don't see it that way, you tell me now, before we join the battle.'
>
> That is how I came to pick 6 March 1984 as the date for Mr Scargill to start his strike.
>
> As it turned out Mrs Thatcher did see it that way.

○

Wapping, Sunday. The debris of the previous night's mass picket litters the street like half-empty glasses the morning after a party. Horse dung on the road and crumpled handbills on the pavement (including one from the SWP which, with that party's unerring knack of missing the point, identifies Brenda Dean and Tony Dubbins as the real enemy). And, above all, yards and yards of iron railings which were torn down the night before. The gap they leave in the wall doesn't make unofficial entry into Fort Murdoch any easier, but they are nevertheless a satisfying sight, the first tiny breach in the defences of this life-destroying behemoth. The main building in Murdoch's plant, thug architecture at its worst, looks as if it could be used as the set for a remake of *Metropolis*. The wretched souls who continue to work at Wapping, cowering behind the curtains of their picket-proof coaches as they are ferried into work, look as if they are auditioning as extras in the same production.

○

For all its barbed wire and security guards, however, Murdoch's plant is not impenetrable. In the computer age, brick walls do not a fortress make; and Wapping is pleasingly vulnerable to what one might call electronic picketing. Normally, any message sent on Telecom Gold, BT's electronic mail service, automatically carries the sender's 'mailbox number'. But on St Valentine's Day this year, as a romantic gesture, British Telecom allowed subscribers to send anonymous messages, free of anything which would identify the sender. A bright person, who had better remain similarly anonymous, took advantage of the offer by programming his computer to spend the day clogging up Murdoch's Telexes at Wapping. Staff in the Fortress tried to cut off the flow by switching off the machines. But as soon as they switched them on again, a little announcement would flash up on the screen: 'Message not completed.' And so the torrent continued, all the livelong day.

○

One other point about Wapping. Local residents are understandably aggrieved that the police insist on checking their identification before allowing them into the streets where they live. But there is at least one local resident who is right behind News International: Rupert Murdoch himself, who has just bought a flat in a warehouse conversion called Telford's Yard, next to the entrance to his plant. The price, I am told, was around £200,000.

○

I'd quite forgotten that Harold Wilson was still alive until he popped up last week with an interview in *Woman's Own* to celebrate his 70th birthday. It was a vintage performance, full of all the Wilsonian hallmarks — not the least of which is an apparently insatiable desire to rewrite history. Wilson told *Woman's Own* that he had been tremendously impressed by Kinnock's conference speech last year: 'My only regret is that he wasn't pointed out to me when I was in power. I would have given him a junior position and he could have picked up valuable experience from a much younger age'. What on earth can Wilson mean by saying that Kinnock wasn't 'pointed out' to him? As Robert Harris points out in his biography of Kinnock: 'Kinnock's speeches [from 1970-1974] brought him to the attention of the party leadership, and Harold Wilson decided to send him as part of a small delegation to the Soviet Union. The group comprised "hand-picked people" . . . When Labour was returned to power as a minority government in March 1974, Wilson thought sufficiently highly of Kinnock's ability in the House of Commons to ask him to second the Queen's Speech, an honour which traditionally goes to a young and promising MP.' It all comes down to a question of who you believe. Even *Woman's Own* concedes that Wilson's memory 'may lapse occasionally', but attributes this to old age. Balderdash: Wilson's memory has been 'lapsing occasionally' since records began.

○

For all the zillions of words that have been written over the years about Reagan's foreign policy, I don't think I've yet seen a neater encapsulation of it than the slogan which is being used to advertise Arnold Schwarzenegger's new film, *Commando*: 'Somewhere, somehow, someone's going to pay.'

ROGER WODDIS

48 hours from Texas

(Apologies to H. David and B. Bacharach)

President Reagan has claimed that the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, which he hopes to overthrow with $100 million aid to the contras, is 'just two days' drive from Harlingen, Texas.'

Listen, Congress,
I have come here to say
That the devil stands at the door.
This takes dollars,
But there'll be hell to pay
If we don't win this holy war.

They are only forty-eight hours from Texas,
Only two days away from our farms.
They'll be camping soon on the lawn
(I've seen it all in *Red Dawn*),
And our friends need arms.

They are only forty-eight hours from Texas,
Only two days away isn't far.
Think of their feet on our soil,
Think of our barrels of oil,
Think of the land that you love,
And if that doesn't get you shook up,
Think of all the terrible things
They'd do to J.R.

They are only forty-eight hours from Texas,
Only two days away from the state.
If the contras don't have the means,
We'll have to send the Marines
Before it's too late.

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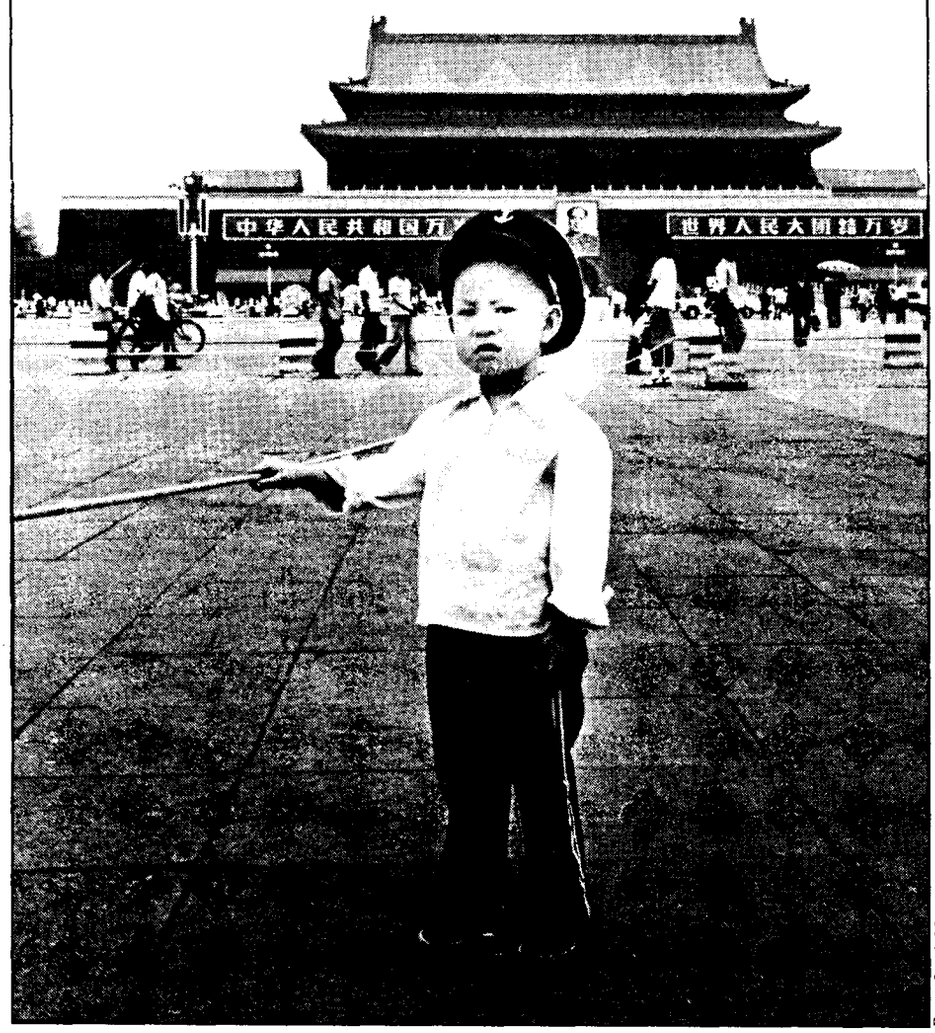
RETURN OF THE BABY KILLERS



Barry Lewis/Network

China's one-child-family policy has provoked a return to female infanticide. JONATHAN MIRSKY reports

CHINA'S COMMUNIST party has always yielded to patriarchal values. Ever since 1934, whenever it attempted to interfere in Chinese family life, if the measures provoked male disapproval the policy has been amended or dropped. Now, despite their forebodings about imminent famines the men who run China are giving in again, this time because the one-child family campaign has led to widespread female infanticide.

At the beginning of March, vice-premier Wan Li let it be known that there would be less strict enforcement of what Elizabeth Croll, Britain's leading expert in family planning policy, has described as 'the most unpopular policy introduced into China in the last five years.'

The Party introduced the policy in 1979, worried that Mao's belief that in a socialist society there can never be too many people, had lead to a situation where Chinese were on the verge of starving to death. The country's arable land had almost reached its maximum productivity; unless the population of well over 1 billion could be levelled off at 1.2 billion by the year 2,000, and reduced to 700 million by 2100, catastrophe was inevitable.

To deal with the impending disaster the one-child-family policy aimed to achieve zero population growth by the end of this century. It contained three strands: initially, no significant portion of society was to escape its demands; it was to be reinforced with tempting rewards and frightening punishments; finally, the State would intrude deeply into family life, the bedroom, the vagina, and when necessary, into the womb.

Everyone understood the magnitude of the task, which was, after all, globally unprecedented. One of the experts quoted in the study *China in the Year 2000*, published late last year in Peking, admitted the difficulty of reducing the already very low birthrate of 10.81 per thousand to 9.5 over the next 17 years if the population is to reach zero growth by 2000.

China has never promulgated a national birth-control law; the disorders in India made an impression in Peking. Instead, regions are encouraged to devise their own regulations — and to enforce them. Minorities, parents who are themselves only children, and only sons who have fathered only a daughter are increasingly permitted a second child.

RELAXATION INCLUDES a prohibition on coercion, Wan Li made clear. But he admitted it had occurred. This marked a change. In early 1985, after the US had withheld $23 million from UN birth control agencies to express its distaste for China's alleged enforced abortion practices, the Chinese angrily insisted that 'abortion in China is provided only at the request of the woman after contraceptive failure or for health reasons.'

No one, inside or outside China, believed this. Between 1979 and 1984 the 53 million abortions reported by the Ministry of Health (equalling the population of France) were a result of what the Chinese call 'persuasion' and 'mobilisation', the latter being a euphemism for 'pressure' and coming into play when the former fails. The American anthropologist Margery Wolf discovered that in one area 252 of the last 587 abortions occurred after 'the big month' of pregnancy, the fifth, a sure sign of 'mobilisation'. In some regions mobilisation was strengthened by reducing the wages of the workmates of recalcitrant women. In others, women were kidnapped in vans and carried off to the abortion centres. A Guangdong official remarked that compared with too many people, 'the moral problems of abortion are not too serious.'

BUT IT IS NOT international revulsion against enforced abortion which has caused Peking to moderate the policy it had insisted must be enforced implacably to avert disaster. It is female infanticide. Infanticide is specifically forbidden in the 1980 Marriage Law and killing infant girls is remembered as one of the most shameful features of the old society. Its dramatic reappearance after 1979 is a measure of the determination of Chinese parents to fulfil their one supreme responsibility: to bear a son.

When Michael Weisskopf, the *Washington Post*'s man in Peking for four years, disclosed in early 1985 that a Chinese survey indicated almost 300,000 cases of female infanticide during 1982, and 345,000 in 1983, there was an official demand that he retract. But in 1983 the party's *People's Daily* had already conceded, 'At present the phenomenon of butchering, drowning, and leaving female

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infants to die is very serious,' a fact reinforced by letters to the press from alarmed women, and heavy warnings from senior officials. In some areas, out of every 500 registered births only 200 were girls.

All this was not mere 'feudal superstition,' as the press attempted to explain. Although many Chinese still believe that only males can worship the ancestors and continue the family line, the hard fact is that peasant families, which receive no state social security, depend on their sons to care for them in their old age. Their daughters, although often much loved, disappear into their husbands' families after marriage. There is a deeply-rooted fear of neglect in old age which probably explains why almost no one has been prosecuted for murdering a female infant in China. One official warning revealed the real focus of the State's concern: if the killing of girls went on, within 20 years *there would be no wives*.

The party respects male priorities. In 1934 its progressive marriage law, which included relatively easy divorce, aroused a passion for divorce among women in the area under communist control but panicked their husbands. The law was altered. In 1942, when Ding Ling, China's leading woman novelist, accused her comrades of male chauvinism, the Chairman's response was to shut her up for two years. Such emancipated views were too shocking for the conservative peasants upon whom the Reds depended. After liberation, when the new marriage law again so enraged men that thousands of women were murdered or committed suicide, the party advised local cadres not to enforce it, according to Elizabeth Croll.

In the case of the one-child-family policy, the party was willing to enforce draconian regulations and create a nation of only-children and anxious elderly peasants, rather than face a future with no food. But Deng Xiaoping's new economic policies, which came into force the same year as the one-child policies, and were designed to strengthen individual initiative, have also tightened the bonds of the traditional family in which, once more, husbands, fathers, and fathers-in-law rule. These men are prepared to kill their infant daughters if that is what it takes to try again for a boy. The party expresses horror, but understands. It will moderate its directives. The men who order that posters be put up all over China proclaiming 'girls are as good as boys,' don't really believe it.

'And ever more came out of that same door wherein I went' . . .

This was the plaint of a man who could not escape the common round of conventional answers to his questions. Perhaps he was stuck in beliefs — maybe even sacred ones — but he was stuck. Is there no way out?

Perhaps; if you would like to see, write to:

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PRETORIA FLAILS OUT

CARRY ON BULLYING

SUZANNE CRONJE describes how South Africa is doing more leaning on the neighbours

THEY CHALKED up yet another foreign policy success in Pretoria last week: they forced the ANC to recall its representative in Botswana, Tami Sindelo. The Botswana government has long and bravely resisted South African requests to hand over or expel refugees from apartheid.

Pretoria even wanted to be supplied with the names and addresses of all the exiles, as well as their fingerprints, taken in the presence of South African security personnel. These demands were indignantly refused by Botswana. In June last year the South African army raided the capital, Gaberone, killing 11 people (including women and children) who, Pretoria claimed, were ANC fighters.

There was an international outcry about this attack, resulting in temporary South African restraint. But threats and military incursions from South Africa have again been stepped up, particularly since January when a landmine near Botswana's border killed two South African whites. Brigadier Minaar Fourie, the local South African commander, unhesitatingly attributed this to the ANC on the basis of a single fresh track which led from the Limpopo river 'straight to the Botswana border'.

Despite denials in Gaberone that it allowed itself to be used by ANC guerrillas, Pretoria threatened to take out the 'terrorist bases' across the border. Tami Sindelo is certain that Pretoria was planning a major raid on the pretext of the ANC's presence; so the ANC office was closed. 'We do not want to expose Botswana and other neighbouring countries to any further danger of invasion', he says. 'That is why the ANC has refrained from using any of the frontline states as military springboards.'

'Not even for fighters, to transit?' he was asked. 'A few years ago, I would have said yes, but as things are today . . .' It must be obvious to anybody who has witnessed developments in recent months — even to Brigadier Fourie and his boss, Defence Minister Magnus Malan - that the massive and increasingly violent resistance to apartheid is not the work of 'infiltrators' who can be moved from the borders into the black townships, which are no longer governable by civil authority.

But the bullying tactics of Pretoria will continue, whatever the costs. There are two important reasons for this. First, Pretoria cannot admit even to itself that it is dealing with a massive, popular, internal revolt which proves everything that has ever been said about this brutal racist dictatorship. The enemy — the communist menace — must be externalised.

Secondly — and this will become increasingly important in the next few weeks — Botha needs a 'Falklands factor'.

As the senior partner in the Southern African Customs Union — to which Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho also belong — Pretoria is able to prevent the development of rival industries in the smaller member states.

It can do more. The Thirion Commission report published this month provides evidence of how Namibia has been systematically denuded of its mineral wealth, to prevent a future independent government from claiming a bigger share of its natural resources (see the *New Statesman*'s preview of this scandal, 19 July 1985). Apart from the enormous revenues syphoned off by the diamond giant, De Beers, and other mining multinationals, Namibia has been kept in many respects as an exclusive preserve for South African interests. For example, the territory's limestone deposits have been 'landlocked', as the report puts it, to exclude potential investors 'and this has been done to preserve for South African cement manufacturers a monopoly as far as the supply of cement to South West Africa is concerned'. Thirion's scathing comments on such practices are of special force because he is a South African-appointed judge.

South Africa in addition, particularly its industrial heartland in the Transvaal, is already running short of water. Its future development depends on importing the resource from neighbouring countries, particularly Lesotho, which was to have supplied a considerable proportion of South Africa's needs by the end of this decade.

The negotiations for the multi-billion dollar Highlands water scheme were impeded by the question of who would control the flow. The 'tap' is to be situated on Lesotho's soil, and the former government of Chief Jonathan was not prepared to concede South Africa any sovereign rights to control the flow. It would have been unlikely that Lesotho would ever turn this tap off, since water would have become its most important source of revenue. But Pretoria wasn't taking chances. Prime Minister Jonathan was too outspoken in his international condemnations of apartheid.

The South African blockade of Lesotho led to the overthrow of the Jonathan government at the end of last year. Pretoria called the blockade 'security checks' to prevent the infiltration of terrorists across the Lesotho border. The idea that this tiny kingdom, entirely surrounded by South Africa, could pose a security threat to its big neighbour was not taken seriously, even by Pretoria's friends, who knew that the water scheme was the real bone of contention.

Jonathan's appeal to Britain and the US to use their influence in Pretoria on his government's behalf, had little effect. When General Lekhanya (who had been in South Africa for talks some days before his coup) took over, a few dozen ANC refugees (evidently not combatants) were expelled from the country. It was duly reported that the new Lesotho government had agreed to transfer water to South Africa 'in perpetuity'.

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THOSE WHO LOOKED AWAY

A NAZI KIND OF PAST

MISHA GLENNY examines the evidence against would-be Austrian President Dr Kurt Waldheim

Vienna

'AN AUSTRIAN who the world trusts' runs the election slogan of Dr Kurt Waldheim who hopes to become the new Austrian president in May. The posters announcing this in Vienna have had a curious addition pasted over them in the last week — 'now more than ever'. Curious because a lot of the outside world may once have trusted Waldheim but no longer does so.

It is paradoxical that although both his credibility abroad and thus his election slogan have been seriously undermined, his support in Austria appears to be growing. An opinion poll taken eight days after allegations of complicity with the Nazis were first made against him, shows that Waldheim has doubled his lead, which is now eight per cent over his major competitor, Dr Kurt Steyrer who enjoys the support of the Socialist Party (SPO), but only 34 per cent of those polled.

What the World Jewish Congress and a few stubborn Austrian and Yugoslav journalists have proved conclusively is that Waldheim has concealed uncomfortable moments from his past and that it is natural to wonder why he has done so, if his conscience is as clean as he says.

Waldheim reacted at first by dismissing the evidence. His army registration document which showed that he had been a member of the SA, the Nazi 'brown shirts', was an administrative error, he said; this was the first he had heard of it. He had enjoyed riding in a club with a few friends and somebody had mistaken this for membership of the SA. But his denial appeared all the more inexplicable when he allegedly admitted to the *New York Times* in an interview that he had in fact known about his unwitting participation in the SA in 1945. The Austrian Prime Minister Fred Sinowatz, not usually given to humour, summed up these inconsistencies by insisting that he would never believe that Waldheim had been in the SA, 'but his horse was clearly an active member.'

More serious still was the suggestion made by the World Jewish Congress that he knew more about the deportation of the Greek Jews than he is prepared to admit. According to his autobiography, Waldheim finished active service after being wounded in 1941. This is hogwash. In 1942 he fought against the partisans in Bosnia and then until 1944 he worked as an interpreter with the 12th Army Commando under General von Lohr, who was directly responsible for the deportations and was executed in 1947 as a war criminal.

It is unlikely that the extent of Waldheim's knowledge of these events will be made public. But even the Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal, who supports Waldheim's presidential candidacy, cannot bring himself to agree with the former UN General Secretary's claim that he had not the slightest idea what was happening to the Greek Jews.

Many Austrians are highly sensitive about the country's Nazi past. They often deny that there was any serious support for Nazism here before the *Anschluss* in 1938, claiming that they were the first victims of Hitler's expansionist politics. However right-wing and Nazi traditions persist, and repeated claims of 'difficult circumstances' and 'ignorance' of what was really going on will never amount to a serious defence.

None of the allegations against Waldheim suggests that he was either a member of the Nazi Party or that he was actively involved in the deportation of over 40,000 Greek Jews from Salonika to Treblinka and elsewhere. Research in Yugoslavia has also shown that the Ustasha medal he was honoured with, the Order of King Zvonimir, was not bestowed upon him for any particular zeal he may have displayed in battles against the partisans.

However, as Richard Von Weizsacker, West Germany's President, who visited Austria last week said:

> It could not escape anyone . . . with open ears and eyes that the deportation trains were rolling. Perhaps one's imagination could not grasp the method and degree of this destruction. But included in the crimes is the attempt made by all too many to refuse to acknowledge what was happening. There were many ways of doing this — not being present, looking away, remaining silent . . .

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LETTERS

Laugh with us

B. C. Bucan, London N16

On whose behalf is Benedict Nightingale speaking (*NS* 14 March) when, having conceded that the play, *Lend me a Tenor*, utilises the same old stereotypes of gay men in the same old way, and furthermore presents an appalling picture of women, he writes that 'one is prepared to overlook implausibility, incidental grossness and much else' in judging whether or not a farce is good?

Many so-called farces include homosexual stereotypes among their characters, but it is how these stereotypes are used, surely, that determines the quality of these farces. To cite two examples from different types of farce, the television 'sit-com' *Brothers* has a 'flamboyantly wincing' (sic) character, but goes beyond the conventional stereotype in that he is constantly shown to have the most sympathy for, and understanding of, the various predicaments the other (mainly non-gay) characters get into, as well as the necessary intelligence often to mastermind their getting out of these situations. Again, Joe Orton, in *What the Butler Saw*, similarly suggests that 'normality' is a precarious state of affairs, whatever the gender, or sexual orientation, of his characters — a staple feature of farces — but does not have to stoop to singling out effeminacy for cheap laughs: the humour lies in the *situation*, not in the caricaturing of a specific type of person.

No, if the bellhop in *Lend me a Tenor* is used to be laughed at, rather than laughed with, this member of the 'brotherhood' *is* furious at finding this sort of thing glossed over in *New Statesman*. You can't expect to endear the journal to gay and lesbian readers by giving space to issues of importance in the gay and lesbian community, while manifesting an insensitivity to wider issues that help support society's ignorance and subsequent homophobia.

Militant isn't all mouth

Peter Cooke, Liverpool

Your treatment of Liverpool's municipal house building record (*NS* 7 March) should not pass without challenge, The correct figures for council housing starts between January 1981 and September 1985 are 2,474 in Liverpool and 117,011 in England as a whole ('Local Housing Statistics', HMSO). These figures in no way reflect the Labour City Council's house building record. Up to April 1983 the Liberals controlled the Council, building very few council houses, whilst in 1984 and the first nine months of 1985 the Labour-controlled Council built more houses than any other District Council in England and Wales. The fact that Militant's only contribution to the Council house building effort has been to make ludicrously exaggerated claims for its success, should not blind us to the real progress that has been made by the City Council in addressing Liverpool's appalling housing problems.

Ray Williams, NGA, Liverpool

Ian Williams (*NS* 7 March) gibes at Tony Mulhearn over his role in bringing about the news and advertising boycott of the *Liverpool Echo* by Labour Councillors.

The boycott came about as a result of a direct approach to the Labour group by me, as NGA Secretary for the area. They were addressed at a meeting by me and other NGA colleagues before arriving at their decision. Tony's role in the affair, being a Councillor and a member of the NGA, was no less than we would have expected from any of our members in the circumstances.

I object to the sneering way that his employment with Bemrose, printer of Murdoch's *News of the World* colour supplement, was dragged into the equation. The NGA and SOGAT have decided not to involve the colour supplement printers in the dispute at this stage.

Stupid or sane?

Nigel Parry-Jones, Bristol

Rob Edwards (*NS* 7 March) suggests that where one stands on nuclear power depends ultimately on whether one is pro- or anti-capitalist. Can I suggest that he looks at it instead against the scale of 'man's' supposed progress towards civilised, rational behaviour.

A nuclear plant does not produce electricity. It produces something that man has known about and used for thousands of years — heat. The heat is then used to produce electricity by very conventional — even traditional — means.

When the cave dwellers produced heat using a stick and a hole in a log, it required a bit of elbow grease, but not much else. Can it be seriously suggested that we have progressed technologicaly because we have now found a way of making the same product as the cave dwellers but with a machine that costs billions of pounds, endangers not only those who work it, but the resident population living nearby, and leaves a waste product that will poison the environment for hundreds or thousands of years to come?

Surely the distinction to be made in whether one supports nuclear energy or not is between stupidity and sanity.

Every one a winner

Michael Winner, Scimitar Films, London W1

Andrew Lumsden (*NS* 28 February) takes the Churchill Bill as reason for suggesting more sympathetic presentation of gays and lesbians in the media. I have no objection to that.

What I do object to is the complete untruth in your stating in the photo captions that my *Death Wish* films involve 'child rape' — that has never been shown; and the 'skewed representation of gays and women'. No *Death Wish* film has ever shown a gay and I do not accept that they show a skewed representation of women.

Anarchist gremlin

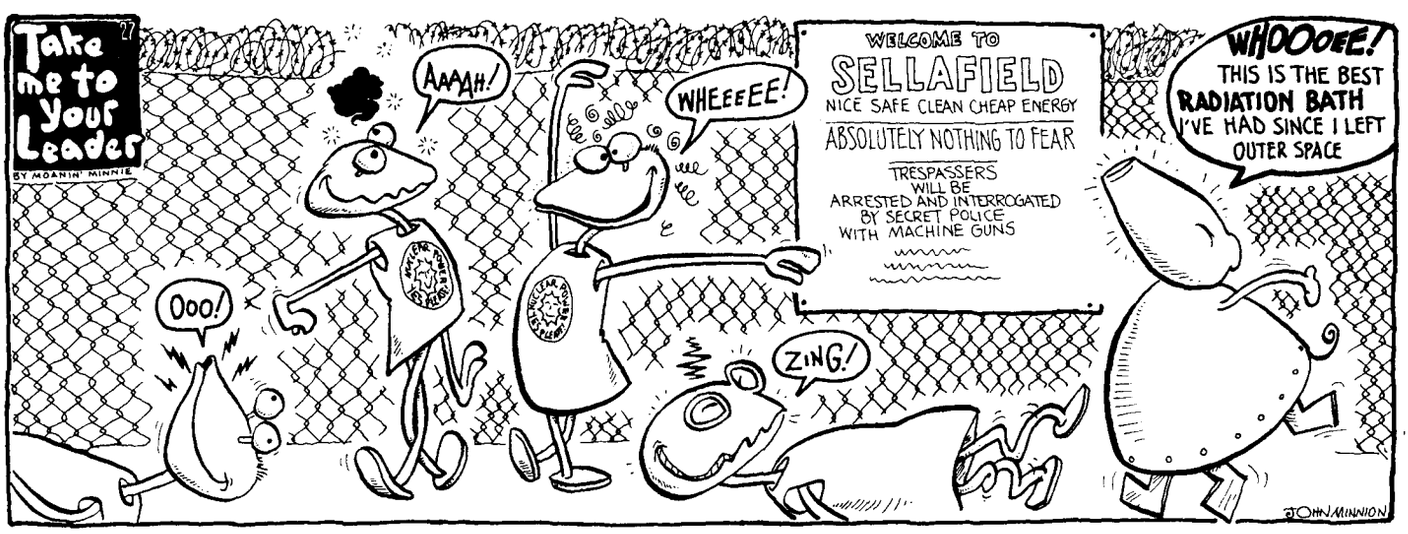
Nicolas Walter, London N1

My review (14 March) of Peter Marshall's edition of *The Anarchist Writings of William Godwin* contains a misprint which misrepresents my opinion of the book. The penultimate sentence should read as follows: 'Perhaps Marshall goes too far in calling Godwin "the first great anarchist thinker", let alone "the most profound and compelling", but he is right to see him as "the most profound exponent of philosophical anarchism".'

Nothing to do with NUS

Phil Woolas, President, National Union of Students

In his report on Militant (*NS* 7 March), Peter Kellner refers to Cheryl Varley as 'student sabbatical organiser for the National Union of Students'. Ms Varley is not, nor has ever been, an NUS executive member or employee. She is employed by Liverpool City Council as one of five 'further education sabbaticals'.



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San Salvador's National Guard stand shoulder to shoulder with armed plainclothes thugs

Network

THE FACE OF WAR

MOST AMERICANS, including me, knew little or nothing about Central America. It is well off the tourist beat, which stops at Mexico. The countries were known as banana republics, a contemptuous description of their economy and their governments. That has now changed, thanks to the President of the United States, who appears obsessed with the area and makes dramatic statements on El Salvador and Nicaragua that bear no relation to facts. The President justifies his policies and actions by declaring that the guerrillas of El Salvador and the Sandinista government of Nicaragua are communists. As a result, Congress cannot be relied on to obstruct the President, for fear of being branded 'soft on communism'. It would be less damaging for an American politician to be accused of cannibalism.

President Reagan has condemned Nicaragua as a cancer posing a direct threat to the US and declared that 'stopping Communism' in Central America is the 'historic test' of his Presidency. MARTHA GELLHORN, war correspondent extraordinary, went on a journey and discovered the reality behind the Washington line on El Salvador and Nicaragua

I went to El Salvador in stupefying ignorance. That winter I was in Mexico on a nostalgic jaunt, looking for remembered sun and sky, enchanted to see again the Mexican Indians who were a happy part of my life years ago. I had read about El Salvador but not properly understood the news; perhaps I did not want to. I imagined a little war in the hills, guerrillas ambushing army units, the army taking revenge on villages suspected of helping guerrillas. Civil war: clearly the business of Salvadorans, not the US government.

As citizens, I think we all have an exhausting duty to know what our governments are up to, and it is cowardice or laziness to ask: what can I do about it anyway? Every squeak counts, if only in self-respect. Gloomily, because otherwise I would be ashamed of myself, I made the small effort of a detour to El Salvador.

Knowing nothing about the capital, San Salvador, I chose a hotel with a familiar name, the Sheraton. It is built in gardens on a hillside, a charming hotel, with pretty rooms and balconies overlooking the city. In this hotel's garden restaurant at breakfast, two American AID — development aid —

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advisers and their Salvadoran colleague had been shot dead by Death Squad assassins. Apparently the reason for these murders was that the Americans were engaged in a cosmetic land reform program, part of the US government's propaganda about improving conditions in El Salvador. A young American reporter checked in,left his luggage, went out and was not seen again until his body was returned to his family, a year or so later. Why the young reporter was killed remains a mystery. It could have been mistaken identity. When killing is so easy, general and never punished, there must often be casual errors.

I dumped my suitcase in the early evening and asked a taxi driver to take me to the center of the city, wherever people met. 'Donde hay el paseo,' I said, thinking of a Mexican square and the people ambling about, or chatting over drinks at sidewalk cafés. He stared at me as if I were mad and drove me to the Cathedral Square, where Archbishop Romero had been killed by a government sniper at the altar during Mass and later the mourning crowds were fired on by the police. Not that I knew this.

The driver told me not to stay long. Only minutes, he said. The square was poorly lit. A few stalls sold cheap candy by the light of kerosene lanterns. People were crowding into ramshackle buses to go home as darkness fell. They were dingily dressed, they looked tired. No one was talking or smiling. That was the first sign I had, and the first glimmer of understanding. Silent, grim Indian-mestizo people, hurrying to leave.

I HAVE NEVER been in such a frightening city. In Madrid and Helsinki and London, danger made a loud noise and came from outside. Here danger came without warning from anywhere. The police hunted at will, day and night. The US government, paymaster of this diseased country, could not protect its own citizens. I was afraid for the people who talked to me. Those who should have hated me as an American were friendly and trusting. But I knew what they risked and was awed by their courage. Each one was alone against the police state, and the chosen weapon of this state is torture.

One afternoon I shared a bench in the back yard of the Diocesan offices with Pedro, the acting head of the Salvadoran Commission of Human Rights. By then the four founders of that group had been killed by the security police or 'disappeared'. Pedro was a handsome and noble young man, part Indian, an ex-student of the University that the army closed and looted. We were selecting, from his files, sworn accounts of atrocity. A kid, late teens, came running to Pedro, breathless, his face scared under a lop-sided cap. I could not understand what he murmured to Pedro, who said to him, 'Do not sleep at home. Move every night to another friend. Do not come here, we will let you know what happens.' The boy nodded. Pedro patted his shoulder: he left the yard. Pedro said, 'The Security police were asking about him at his house.'

That is all the people could do to protect themselves: hide and hope. I was afraid for Pedro for months and finally learned of a group of Americans in California, fine 'bleeding hearts' who had contacts in San Salvador, wrote to them and in time heard that Pedro had escaped to Mexico. I hope it is true.

The rich Salvadorans, and they are very rich, are solidly protected by high walls around their houses, ten or twelve feet high, often topped with barbed wire. The doors in these walls are steel. Coming back to the hotel at dusk I would see patrolling plain clothes guards, with pistols showing under their loose shirts. The fear of the rich was a vague dread of communists. Inside a well-sealed elegant house, I had a very different conversation with upper class ladies who assured me that only a few communist agitators were causing the trouble. The talk about people being murdered was propaganda. If there were peasant refugees, they were fleeing from the communists. As so many of their friends had departed to safe luxury in Florida, they were proud of themselves for staying here and leading their usual lives — work and play, dinner parties and dances at night in their homes; businesses were doing well. No, their sons were not in the army; the army was really for poor boys who learned hygiene and basic literacy.

Salvadoran peasants, Indians and part-Indian mestizos, born poor in their villages, became destitute when forced to escape empty-handed to internal refugee camps. The government, which causes this pitiful exodus, gave no assistance, not a kilo of rice, not a blanket. Without the Church, courageous in El Salvador, the peasant refugees would starve. They survived in the worst conditions I have ever seen, in shelters built of cardboard, tin, scraps, with inadequate food and water, without medical care, in fear. The only secure camp was behind the large Catholic Seminary in San Salvador; the people were guarded by a building.

As we were talking, in that sad place, a whisper, a shiver ran through the crowd; women lowered their voices. They showed me a young man in an undecipherable blue uniform, walking like a cat along the top of the high wall that surrounds the football field and gardens of the Seminary. *Policia*, they said. No purpose in that cat walk except to frighten deeply frightened people. 'My friend Corazon,' a woman whispered, 'went outside to the dentist, she could no longer suffer the pain of her tooth. She has not come back, no one has seen her; we will never see her.' The Catholic lawyer who had brought me said we ought to go; it was bad for the people if the police watched them talking to an obvious foreigner.

Washington's concrete bunker-embassy in San Salvador: symbol of the Reagan doctrine

THE US EMBASSY is a grey cement stronghold constructed as if for attack by artillery and aerial bombardment. The turnstile entrance in the high link fence was guarded by armed Salvadoran soldiers; US Marines guarded the interior. Authorized personnel escort you to your destination; too dangerous to let a stranger roam the premises. This nervy caution applied even to the foreign press stationed in San Salvador and well known at the Embassy. The briefing was held in a basement room, like a bomb shelter, where a conceited overfed American army officer, clearly an old Vietnam hand, patronized the young reporters with military-sounding rubbish. The news of the day was the capture of three guerrillas by the Salvadoran army; the captured weaponry, two shot guns and a pistol. (When asked what happened to the guerrillas, he smiled and shrugged.) Not exactly the weapons that President Reagan says are supplied by Cuba and Nicaragua. Those much-advertised weapons, which justify the enormous American military aid to the Salvadoran government, have never been found. Nor has anyone explained how these weapons could be delivered to isolated El Salvador, where the US and Salvadoran governments have complete sea and air control.

The old-Vietnam-hand officer informed his respectful audience of young journalists that if only Congress would vote more money, El Salvador could get the equipment it needed and easily finish off this rebellion. Just like Vietnam. Since then, Congress has voted more and more of American taxpayers' money and that money has supplied Vietnam-style equipment.

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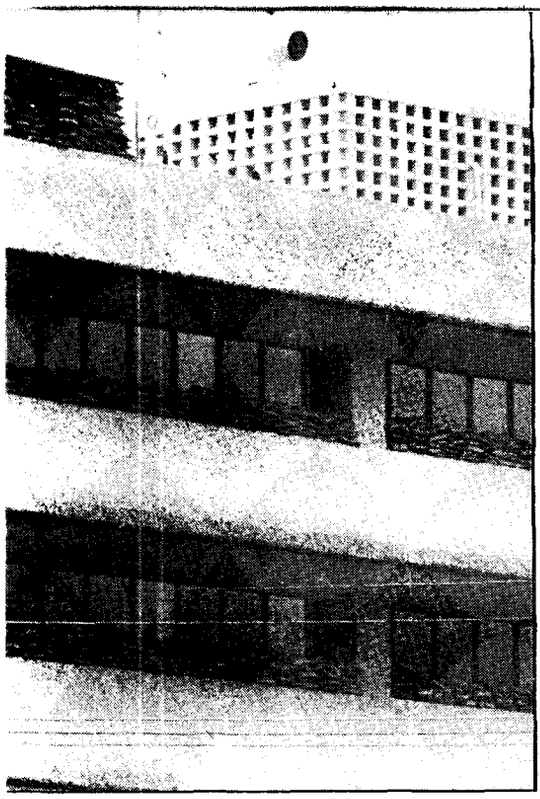

Network

AC-47 planes, gunships, known in Vietnam as 'Puff the Magic Dragon'; Hughes 500 helicopters with Gatling guns; improved bombs; napalm and white phosphorus. The refugee population has increased.

I was given a runaround in a Salvadoran government office, calculated to insult. One stout well-dressed mocking official, seated behind his bare desk, sent me to another and another; finally the top man said of course I could visit Ilopango, the women's prison, all their prisons were model establishments, I was welcome to inspect. Of course I was not; I was stopped by an armed guard at the prison gate who got angry when I insisted and pointed his rifle and shouted at me to shut up and leave. But I had seen the thin weary women, in the clean faded cotton dresses that are their uniform, filing in with small baskets, bringing food to their daughters.

Suddenly I decided to get out; I could not stand another day in this fearful city. The callousness of those who owned and ran the country and the persecution of the poor made me sick, a state of nerves close to hysteria. I packed in a rush and drove to the airport; I would have taken a plane in any direction.

The airport lounge was crowded and silent. People did not look at each other. They did not move; they stood or sat by their luggage. They waited as if holding their breaths. Planes are regularly overbooked in this part of the world; to be bumped off would have been bad enough but there must have been fear of being stopped by the police, for no reason, stopped and taken away. Yet these were the privileged who could get a passport and pay for a plane seat. I was the most privileged, with my splendid American passport and my travellers' cheques, and I was frantic to leave.

The Contras' war on Nicaragua's northern frontier should be called Reagan's war, though it is organized terror raids, not war. Fomented and paid for by the CIA, evidently very dear to Mr Reagan's heart, it mainly kills peasants — old men, women, children — and destroys the modest wood shacks that were new kindergartens and clinics. Hit and run in mountain territory. On the southern frontier, a Contra group, ARDE, supplied but not directed by the CIA, does similar though lesser harm. I did not reach either frontier war zone, due to my lack of time, four-wheeled transport and superior leg muscles, not official obstruction or secrecy. The effect of this ugly little war is a drain on money and manpower, both of which are in very short supply in Nicaragua.

And of course, being human, Nicaraguans mourn the deaths, often atrocious. Clean killing was never the form of Somoza's guardsmen, the Contras, likened by President Reagan, in a flight of hyperbole, to the Founding Fathers of America. This is truly astonishing, since the Founding Fathers were not known to gouge out the eyes and mutilate the bodies of their enemies, or to commit other such unseemly acts. Combined with economic blockade, the undeclared American war by proxy is punishing the poor people of Nicaragua whose only crime is their will to be free in their own land, and free of gringos. You can understand their point. Gringo governments supported their tyrant Somoza for over 40 years; gringo Marines occupied their country, bolstering oppression.

Nicaragua is not a communist state, no matter how often a gringo President says it is. The entire country is open for inspection by anyone, notably Americans, who wishes to visit, look, question. But Nicaragua, in desperate need, naturally and gladly takes help from wherever it comes. A multinational workforce assists in everything from engineering to surgery, among them Cubans, Russians, Norwegians, Argentinians, Belgians, Britons and many young Americans.

Thus far American public opinion prevents sending the 82nd Airborne, the Marines, the B-52s, whatever, to remove the Sandinista government by force. Sixty-three per cent of Nicaraguans voted for the Sandinista government in a closely supervised election, whose honesty was confirmed by responsible foreign observers. It was not the sort of show election that the US government promoted in Vietnam and now in El Salvador. Sixty-three per cent is a sizeably larger popular majority than gave power to the present American or British governments.

The Sandinista leaders are inexperienced. Where would they have gained experience in government? They muddle and make mistakes, they are foolishly tactless. Perhaps people in Latin America are tired of being tactful to North America. It was terrible judgement as well as terrible bad manners to permit noisy rudeness to the Pope, the world's most appealing reactionary. The fact that the Church hierarchy in Nicaragua, very different from the Church in El Salvador, is hostile to the Sandinistas is no excuse. Far from being a highly organized police state, President Reagan's view, Nicaragua is highly disorganized, doing its best with inadequate means. But the Sandinista leaders have one major value. They are committed to the service of their people, who have always been wretchedly deprived; they intend to make life decent for the poor. As the foundation of a new life in Nicaragua, they abolished torture and execution which always before were the rule. For the first time, the state is out of the murder business.

THE MEN IN WASHINGTON seem unable to accept that there are more poor people than rich people in the world. They do not recognize that poor people, in the late twentieth century, cannot endure poverty and disease and ignorance forever. When minimal social justice is long denied, the poor will rebel. If rebellion can be crushed — as is perhaps possible in a very small country like El Salvador — it will rise again later. Nicaragua could be bombed flat, and then what? A success story like Vietnam?

The President, the Cabinet, the elected members of both Houses of Congress should read the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America, all of it, every day. It is a glorious statement of human rights, and does not date. 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.'

Does that apply only to North American white men? And how about: 'But when a long Train of Abuses and Usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a Design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their Right, it is their Duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.' El Salvador and Nicaragua in eighteenth-century prose.

Oh Yank, let's go home. Leave Central America to decide its own destiny. Americans should not be expected to quake in terror for the nation's safety because of two small underdeveloped countries south of its border. It is a ridiculous posture, like standing on a table and screaming with fear of a mouse. I prefer Edmund Burke to any panic speeches from Washington: 'Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together.'

The Face of War, *an updated edition of Martha Gellhorn's war writings, will be published by Virago on 24 March, price £4.95.*

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Andrzej Krauze

Having their way with Will

Andrew Rissik

William Shakespeare
TERRY EAGLETON *Basil Blackwell*
£12.50 & £3.95
Shakespeare
GERMAINE GREER *Oxford* £9.95 & £2.95

IN HER SLIM critical book, Germaine Greer writes, 'The public duty of the playwright was to bring the caviare of his angelic intellectual exercise within the grasp of those savage hordes, who were quite capable of disrupting performances they could not follow.' In his study, Terry Eagleton, who is Tutor and Fellow in English at Wadham College, Oxford, tells us that 'it is difficult to read Shakespeare without feeling that he was almost certainly familiar with the writing of Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Wittgenstein and Derrida.'

Such fatuous tributes as these are, of course, only the most recent manifestations of a prevailing critical tendency to regard Shakespeare not as mere poet or dramatist but as God: all-knowing, all-wise and all-embracing. According to the unstoppable supply of critical books which pour yearly from the presses, Shakespeare had Christ's ability to read the human heart, Walt Disney's enchanting verve as a popular entertainer and Aristotle's pre-occupying High Seriousness. Although specific minor critics have specific minor criticisms, in each case the burden of the argument is the same. Shakespeare outdistanced and out-achieved everyone who had come before him and, in some way or other, his work anticipates everything that we have seen since. He is attended, centuries after his death, by the kind of elaborate rhetorical hyperbole which only a lunatic like Nero can have enjoyed during his own lifetime. In the Middle Ages, scholars laboured with indefatigable zeal to swell the vast edifice of Biblical criticism. Today we pay that compliment to Shakespeare, an innocent and unassuming dramatist who would have been appalled at such madness. One looks in vain, in the index of both books, for any reference to comparable dramatists such as Aeschylus, Sophocles or Chekhov, although, predictably, Brecht and Yeats turn up in both. Criticism of this kind regards Shakespeare's plays not as drama, not as enacted narrative and psychology, but as scripture. These texts are Holy Books.

Of the two, Terry Eagleton's is much the saner and more perceptive. It's a brief but knottily detailed account of the canon whose thesis is that Shakespeare's achievement is built on a number of philosophical paradoxes and antagonisms. The imaginative freedom of language contradicts and transcends the material intractability of the body; the anarchic, irrational impulse of sexuality runs counter to social custom, moral law and inherited political orthodoxy; the hierarchical, conservative Shakespeare who wrote the plays — the mercantile adventurer who retired to Stratford and lived as a country gentleman — is the mere outward identity of a far more radical and dangerous literary intelligence. This is the Shakespeare who had an intuitive knowledge of Marx and Neitzsche, whose work explodes the false, sentimentalising definitions imposed on it by Late Victorian critics, and Eagleton's book is most revealing when it is at its most caustically specific. I want to cheer him on when he says things like, 'The Senate, however, are not impressed, and Alcibiades is banished for his pains, if not for his atrocious verse' and '*King Lear* opens with a bout of severe linguistic inflation' or when he describes Cleopatra as 'less a rounded "character" than a complex flow of impulse'.

But there are other, deader, more constipated passages, rich in crypto-analytical bullshit. 'Desire in Shakespeare is often a kind of obsession, a well-nigh monomaniacal fixation on another which tends to paralyse the self to a rigid posture. In this sense, it has something of the density and inertia of the body itself.' This is academic psycho-babble, and one wants to answer it by yelling, McEnroe-like, 'You-Can*not*-Be-Serious!' Tautological and platitudinous, its own 'linguistic inflation' denies it precise meaning. Later, when he tells us that, in Shakespeare, desire is a cause of instability, one wants to reply that the same goes for almost every writer since Aeschylus. This isn't a critical insight. It's a commonplace of human nature. In the end, Eagleton's verbose textual ingenuity wrecks the book. When he announces, 'The name of Prospero's language is Ariel, who symbolises his word in action, the precise, fluent fulfilment of his desires,' the temptation to write in terms of symbolism and metaphor — to doodle with the freedom of language — has usurped the critic's responsibility to the complexity of his source. These grand, clever-sounding statements are simply a new form of old-fashioned pedagogic dogmatism. You teach Shakespeare by turning the relationships in his plays into a kind of rigid literary algebra.

The tragedy of so much contemporary Shakespearean criticism is that the people who write it want, more than anything, to be creative, and their 'creativity' shows. Terry Eagleton's *William Shakespeare* is an extraordinarily elaborate piece of work whose preoccupations and theories are so intense and fervid that they betray a fundamental indifference to the nominal subject. I can recall a deliriously serious, insanely well-footnoted essay by Parker Tyler, in which he argued that *The Great Escape* was a protracted metaphor for buggery. The film wasn't half as much fun as what Tyler said about it, but the fact that, after a fashion, Tyler's daft theory held up, didn't make it any less daft. Critics aren't jazz pianists, artists valued for their improvising bravura and, too often, they are no more intelligent or commonsensical than Shakespeare's Don Armado, that fantastic, flatulent Spaniard who travestied the impregnable conceit of Sir Walter Raleigh.

Germaine Greer's *Shakespeare* gives us slackly-written platitude, dull, moralising rhetoric, in place of Eagleton's cerebral chic. She isn't wrong or stupid, but this is a large subject and one expects more than routine

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undergraduate-essay assertion. Of *Macbeth* she tells us: 'The character insists upon its universality, just as the stage persists in being a kind of no man's land, an isthmus in a sea of cosmic forces, a world where we may all be lost except "by grace of Grace".' The cover blurb states 'That Shakespeare was and is a popular artist who did much to shape the values we consider to be typically English is the central theme of Germaine Greer's original and thought-provoking study.' But there's nothing original or thought-provoking about such an idea, least of all when decked with phrases like 'an isthmus in a sea of cosmic forces' or 'the caviare of his angelic intellectual exercise'. And when Ms Greer says that in I.ii of *The Tempest* the audience already knows 'there's no harm done' she *is* wrong. They don't.

The hardback editions of both books are expensively priced, but we should see them on the remainder shelves before too long. □

Vile bodies

Sheila MacLeod

Holy Anorexia
RUDOLPH M. BELL *Chicago* £18.95
Hunger Strike
SUSIE ORBACH *Faber* £9.95

IT WAS THOMAS S. SZASZ who — much to the consternation of his medical colleagues — first designated anorexia nervosa as a hunger strike. When I attempted to use the same term (which I had already used in print) a few years ago on a TV programme which shall remain nameless, the presenter stopped me at once, shocked by my apparent frivolity. How could I, in view of what was happening in Northern Ireland, apply the same term to the antics of a bunch of teenage girls? But that was precisely my point. In starving himself, Bobby Sands was 'making a political protest' and consequently shown no mercy by the authorities. At the same time Dolours Price, who had also been starving herself, was released from prison because she was 'suffering from anorexia nervosa'. Even when they are behaving in exactly the same way, men act but women suffer. Men are to be taken seriously but women dismissed as so many suitable cases for treatment.

It would take many thousands of words to analyse and disentangle such assumptions in regard to centuries of self-starvation, but I hope my example above will serve to illustrate two points. First, why anorexia has only recently received the serious attention the phenomenon clearly merits. And, second, why those same assumptions about men and women still underlie most accounts of the subject.

According to Rudolph M. Bell, 'holy anorexia' is a form of self-starvation practised by female saints and/or nuns, sometimes to the point of death. It was at its height in the 14th century but has persisted in a fluctuating manner ever since. Young women, of whom the epitome is Catherine of Siena, refuse to eat, claiming that their abstention is God's will and recognising no earthly authority. Bell traces this rebellion to the inferior position of women within the Church and, where evidence exists, to early patterns of feeding and weaning. It is not in reality God's will but Catherine's that she starve herself, not God's but Catherine's will which triumphs in her early death (at 33). Catherine's will-to-starvation constitutes a bid for autonomy and power rooted in a sense of unworthiness and possibly the guilt of the well-fed infant who survived her twin. In positing a multi-factorial base for self-starvation, Bell is both enlightened and convincing. His book is impressively researched, easy to read and utterly (if somewhat morbidly) fascinating. But some doubts creep in.

'Food,' he writes, 'is food, not an incorporated phallic symbol, but it is no less sexual for being food. It sustains the body, corrupt life on earth, and thereby kills the soul, life everlasting.' This seems to me a perfect description (though presumably both he and Susie Orbach would disagree) of present-day anorexia nervosa. The question remains: why should an obsession with the corruption of the body and the purity of the soul be a woman's prerogative? The answer is that it is not. In a most peculiar passage Bell argues that although holy men like Simeon Stylites also starved themselves, they cannot be accounted 'holy anorexics' because they, unlike their female counterparts, knew exactly what they were doing and always remained in complete control of their behaviour. It could equally well be argued that Catherine knew better and had more control over what she was doing because she had more to contend with from the Church, more opposition which she nevertheless overcame. In other words, that the difference is one of degree rather than kind, her 'success' being the greater.

It is a pity (but no doubt a matter of academic respectability) that Bell is so tentative about connecting holy anorexia with anorexia nervosa. In my opinion there are more points of identification than either he or Orbach seem prepared to admit. Orbach's thesis is that anorexia springs directly from the socially inferior position of women and the way women's bodies are represented by the media. And so, in part, it does. Anorexia nervosa is a hunger strike, all right, but it is not so much a strike against 'femininity' as against the very conditions of existence: being born, separating from the mother, growing-up, growing old and, eventually, death. Orbach nowhere mentions that men too become anorexic, let alone that their number is increasing. The male of the species too is capable of questioning the conditions of his existence through self-starvation, as the lives of both Kafka and Byron (among others) can attest.

Gender, social, political or economic status, immediate physical surroundings, family circumstances: those can all be seen as prisons which deprive us of our autonomy and which therefore become a legitimate focus for protest in the form of a hunger strike. But what is fundamentally at stake in anorexia nervosa is a denial that we are bodies — with all that this implies. How and why both men and women struggle — and have struggled for hundreds of years — to maintain such a denial through self-starvation has yet to be explored. □

Felicity Napier

Natasha says

she was a fellow vegetarian and Friend of the Earth,
who went to his Tuesday yoga class.
She looked like Janey Morris
and of course he fell in love with her.
He called her Goddess and begged her to live with him.

Within a month he knew he'd made a bad mistake:
she was too submissive, too tearful;
he wanted a woman who'd be an equal,
as well as beautiful and feminine,
a vegetarian and Friend of the Earth.

'I'm going to France for a couple of weeks'
he announced, 'you must be gone by my return'.
'Yes, Robert' she sighed, dabbing at her eyes.
He kissed her briefly on the cheek;
she waved him goodbye and set to work.

First, she took his jug and watered the pillows,
the duvet, the sofa, the red velvet curtains,
the matting in the hall and his fine Kelim.
Like Demeter, she scattered the small black seeds,
humming to herself, and sprinkling more water.

Then she dialled; listened to the New York Speaking Clock
and gently laid the receiver on the duvet;
it would lie, like a slug, awaiting the growth
of the bright sprigged pile of mustard and cress —
so good for you — and slammed his door.

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FICTION

No man's land

Bill Greenwell

Private Papers
MARGARET FORSTER *Chatto* £8.95
Duet For Three
JOAN BARFOOT *The Women's Press* £3.95
Waterloo, Waterloo
TERESA WAUGH *Hamish Hamilton* £9.95
The Lilac Bus
MAEVE BINCHY *Century* £8.95
Burning Houses
ANDREW HARVEY *Cape* £9.50
The Imperial Way
JAMES MELVILLE *Deutsch* £9.95

BOTH MARGARET FORSTER'S **Private Papers** and Joan Barfoot's **Duet For Three** take readers uncertainly across the muddy middle ground between an elderly mother and an antagonistic daughter. Their routes across what is, in every sense, no-man's-land, may differ, but theme and intention are in common.

Each woman character provides the reader with different versions of events. Between these the authors first invite us to choose, before coming to a mutual pact that there is a considerable degree of deception, unconscious or not, on either side. And then we are nudged, like the characters, into some tentative treaties. In Forster's novel, it is the mother with whom we seem expected to come to terms, after initial enlistment by the daughter; in Barfoot's novel, the reverse is the case. And this, I think, is what leads me to prefer Barfoot. The daughter in *Duet For Three* is such an objectionably cold fish that it seems a small triumph to have been persuaded. The mother in *Private Papers*, however, is rather too soft a target for her strident daughter Rosemary, who sounds ten or 20 years younger than Forster would have us believe.

But this is a matter of mild preference. Readable though both novels are, neither is a resounding success. *Duet For Three* has the more immediately interesting situation. Aggie, the plump, ailing and now incontinent mother, has had her frigid husband die early in their atrophied marriage, leaving the daughter, June, in whom Aggie has invested all her emotional capital, to turn out like her scrimping father. And their ages — respectively in their late seventies and late fifties — add another dimension to a novel set in Canada and covering, by properly unostentatious flashback, about 60 years. Much is made of the neat parallel whereby June herself is deserted with a child plainly in the image of the mother she despises. It is a simple, effective, ironic twist; but the Third (as in *Three*), the grand-daughter, is naggingly insubstantial.

Private Papers is much louder, more invigorating in the variety and number of its characters. And the device chosen by Forster works well at first, despite its implausibility. Rosemary, eldest of four daughters, discovers her mother's hidden, private memoir. This we read as its pages are successively discovered, interspersed with Rosemary's *written* notes. The alternation of versions becomes progressively less arresting as a technique; and the tale is artificially pumped up with the detailed, unnecessarily sensational lives of the other sisters. Barfoot's *Duet For Three* wins this contest for its relentless focus.

Both Forster and Barfoot handle the passage of time well; but Teresa Waugh's second novel, **Waterloo, Waterloo**, is more exceptional in this respect and in every other. She deals fleet-footedly with about a dozen years in the petty-minded and obsessive world of Jack Bennett, a retired major. He has retreated to Devon, principally to play toy soldiers, an ambition rather inhibited by his unpleasant second wife Peggy, his tedious stepson Nigel, his grasping girlfriend Suzanne and his own rather solitary daughter, Josephine.

To humanise such characters, each of whom looks ripe for caricature, takes considerable skill, but Waugh proves especially good at the small change of relationships. She has an eye for silent bickering, an ear for the grinding absurdity of petty argument. The man from Hamish Hamilton is a dog for adverbs, and we are expected to find this a *wickedly, bitingly* and even *painfully* funny novel. Rather otherwise, I thought: Waugh is a subtler observer than this. She is not in the business of brisk funnies. Indeed, her quiet, artfully neutral style sabotages laughter in favour of more impressive intensity. Waugh cannot (a local note) spell Exeter's Northcott Theatre, although its relentlessly Shakespearean diet is accurately observed. And, although locals would most certainly quibble with 'South Devon' being 'not many miles from Exeter', her invented village of Chadcombe is wickedly, bitingly, even painfully authentic. *Waterloo, Waterloo* also offers the pleasing bonus of a well-worked, quietly woven thread of plotted analogy to the Napoleonic Wars.

For the rest, Maeve Binchy's **The Lilac Bus** is a bold, well-told series of interlocking tales, masquerading as a collection of short stories when it is essentially a cunningly structured novel about surface and reality (this week's — but perhaps any week's — principal theme). **Burning Houses** tells a novel within a novel, in which a melodramatic young writer bounces his purple prose off an old phoney who sounds alarmingly like Dali at his more frisky. Andrew Harvey's language struck me as brilliant, but unreadably lush, and I found his principal figures sufficiently irritating to ruin the read. James Melville's **The Imperial Way**, however, deserves a broad audience, despite some suspicious thinness in its central character. She is a journalist researching a Japanese Mr Big, and we are here again, alternating narratives and all, in the business of sifting self-justifying fantasy and fact. The narrative is crisp and the central event, the fanatical nationalist uprising of 1936, is compellingly described. Mr Melville's eye may well be on the historical clock, but his novel also demonstrates that his finger is placed with some precision on the pulse. □

Shorter reviews

Uninvited Guests: The Intimate Secrets of TV and Radio
LAURIE TAYLOR and BOB MULLAN *Chatto* £9.95

What kind of person is your TV set — male? female? warm? cold? a friend? a critic?

No — this isn't someone's feeble proposal for an *NS* competition. It's one of the patronising questions put to small groups of viewers (193 people in all), brought together in private houses to discuss their favourite programmes. Fragments of their conversations, along with distillations from a specially commissioned nationwide sample (3,000 people), provide the basis for this baffling book.

I've been through it several times (no sweat; it's an easy read), trying in vain to fathom who and what it is for. Maybe it is intended as a comfort-and-aid report for ratings-obsessed programmers. Its catch-penny title and garish dust jacket, however, suggest a snare for gossip-hungry book-buyers — who, if caught, would be entitled to sue for breach of promise.

The authors claim it as an in-depth audience study, designed to flesh out the usual dry statistics. Both are sociology academics. One often appears on the small screen. They must be well aware that their contrived investigation methods and sloppy presentation rule out any serious consideration of their findings.

The bulk of the book — apart from some occasional incidental flashes of insight and a few genuinely informative passages — is devoted to group comments about the off-screen and on-screen personae of chat and games show hosts and soap opera players. The participants' apparent one-track obsession with 'star' personalities is not proven, since the questions put to them were designed to provoke such responses — right down to those sex-typed TV sets.

Even their perceptions of news bias were queried — as reported in a preposterously manipulated chapter — only in terms of the personalities of the newscasters. And what are we supposed to learn from the speculations of a group of vaguely-categorised telly addics — 'Alice (52)'; 'Mary (47)' — invited to select suitable soap opera roles for the royals?

This parlour game technique might perhaps serve the limited objectives of simple market research. In the context of the authors' pretensions it is a truly trivial pursuit.

Nina Hibbin

Honduras: State for Sale
RICHARD LAPPER and JAMES PAINTER *Latin American Bureau* £3.50

'Where in hell is Honduras?' pleads the off-duty GI's favourite sweatshirt in what is now the garrison town of Comayagua. Time was when all of Central America was nominally under the control of this former mining settlement. But even in those days, in the words of an historian quoted here, 'Everyone knew there was an entity called Honduras, but nobody knew where it was.'

After the fall of the Somoza regime in Nicaragua, the Carter administration took a conscious decision to transfer the fulcrum of US policy in Central America to sleepy Tegucigalpa, capital of neighbouring Honduras. This was to be 'a

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dependable satellite, bought and paid for by American military and economic largesse', wrote columnist Jack Anderson at the time. Minor tiffs over the price notwithstanding, the country obligingly transformed itself into the 'USS Honduras', home to more than 8,000 Nicaraguan *contras* and host to a legion of US troops on extended 'manoeuvres'.

But if its notoriety has spread — and some can even place it on the map — the important questions have remained unanswered.

This, after all, is the model democracy, the shining example to set against 'totalitarian' Nicaragua. For the first time ever, one fairly-elected Honduran government seems set to hand over power peacefully to another. Yet this is also the poorest country on the Latin American mainland, surely a breeding ground, if ever there was one, for revolutionary politics? As it happens, when the people of Honduras went to the polls on 24 November, they voted overwhelmingly for a trio of rival conservative candidates none of whom could promise anything but more IMF-style austerity. The centre-left options won only a handful of congressional seats.

The 'where' is easy: to answer the 'why' and the 'how' you'd have to write a book. At last, somebody has.

Phil Gunson

After a Funeral
DIANA ATHILL *Cape* £9.50

In 1963 publisher Diana Athill met for the first time someone whose writing she already loved, an Egyptian from a wealthy background who was living in exiled poverty in Germany. 'I felt elated ... . it is not often that one sees the possibility of knitting a new person into one's life as one did in youth, and that had just happened.' She helped him to move to England. In 1968 this 'Didi' killed himself in her flat. 'No other end was imaginable for him and I had known it.'

The book tells of the time between, during which the excitement generated by Didi's charm gave way to exasperation as the full extent of his inability to cope with living became apparent. 'I have lied,' he wrote in his final diary entry, 'sponged,been hypocritical, dished out impossible cheques . . .' He also drank, gambled, interpreted every chance nuisance as a personal slight and used people up emotionally.

Or, to put it another way, in Diana Athill's words, 'The kinder and more patient people were with him the more evil he felt himself to be.' 'I for one could have loved Didi more and better than I did, but all that would have happened then would have been that he'd have had more love to disbelieve in.' An unassuagable black hole of need and, as so often, making itself felt in behaviour more likely to alienate than enlist potential allies.

If this short review is overburdened with quotation, that is in itself a way of saying do read the book. The author is throughout scrupulously true to her own reactions — from sexual attraction to weary tolerance, encompassing concern, annoyance, amusement, anger, obsession, detachment . . . — and she quotes passages from the diaries he bequeathed her which are far from flattering to herself — worse, full of misconceptions.

It is a pitiful story told without pathos; graphic, tough-minded, not tainted by that enervating and inhibiting guilt which can so easily cloud the environs of a Didi. Diana Athill's own warmth and honesty provide something of a counterbalance to the unanswerable waste of Didi's life. Among his misjudgments was his view of her writing; he didn't care for it.

Gillian Wilce

FILMS

Out of steppe

John Coleman

White Nights (PG)
Odeon, Leicester Square
A.K. (15)
ICA
The Return of the Living Dead (18)
Prince Charles; Scala; Cannons, Oxford Street and Chelsea

IF ANY NOOSE is good noose, then the one from which Mikhail Baryshnikov dangles after some danced despair is surely a fitting image for the way Taylor Hackford's ambitious **White Nights** artistically hangs itself from the very outset. For this stage-suicide is simply part of a lengthy pre-credits treat of terpsichore — Roland Petit's *'Le Jeune Homme et la Mort'*: little wonder the film lasts 136 minutes.

Of course the occasion might dubiously be justified at a plot level. Tumultuous applause, and we see a glittering London audience; their beloved Kolya Rodchenko, Russian ballet star who defected eight years previously to American fame and fortune, is emplaning after the performance for Tokyo; by a horrid irony (the sort scriptwriters are paid to dream up), his flight crash-lands at a Soviet base in Siberia. Kolya-Baryshnikov's manager Anne (Geraldine Page) is unharmed but her charge gets a bash on the head and is hospitalised. Enter wickedly smooth KGB Colonel Chaiko (played with steely relish by the Polish émigré director Jerzy Skolimowski), who sets about persuading this renegade *deus ex machina* — great propaganda coup — to renounce his defection by dancing again with the Kirov Ballet in Leningrad. Chaiko meanwhile bamboozles the US Embassy in Moscow, where Anne is fuming, with fake X-rays, suggesting Kolya's head injuries are so grave he is unvisitable.

Baryshnikov brooding in *White Nights*

And now Chaiko activates the movie's other big wheeze. (One hears the whir of those studio minds. Why not confront Baryshnikov, king of ballet, with Gregory (*Cotton Club*) Hines, the emperor of tap? Have 'em do numbers *together*, yeah, grab two audiences, maybe?) So the politely incredible character of Raymond (Hines) is concocted, a Vietnam-and-racially-disillusioned Black who hoofed it, naturally, to old Mother Russia some years back, married his young interpreter Darya (Isabella Rossellini) and — his political usefulness outworn — has been reduced to doing a village-hall *Porgy and Bess* in the Siberian wastes. Arm twisted by Chaiko, Raymond and missus get on Kolya's case. Soon the threesome is installed in Kolya's old Leningrad apartment, where drab little Darya — Ingrid Bergman's top-model daughter radiant under a lousy haircut — wonders at the luxury and we wonder what's passing through Kolya's quite healed head as he roams the Kirov, plays jazz-pop-modern tapes to a slowly thawing Raymond in a rehearsal studio, notes where the monitoring TV-eyes are placed.

There is plenty more plot, some eerie fragments of it involving Helen Mirren as one Galina, ex-ballerina-mistress of Kolya, disgraced after he skipped during a London tour, now powerfully reinstated at the Kirov and distractedly coming under his animal spell

Recommended viewing

A regular selection by our critic from films still doing the rounds

Dreamchild Carroll-Dodgson's Alices — fictions, fantasy and fact — collide in scintillating cinema first for Gavin Millar, polishing every facet of original Dennis Potter script. Old Mrs Hargreaves, née Liddell (superb Coral Browne), has bad, lyric, macabre 1932 centenary NY trip, memory's whirligig halting on late-learned love (Ian Holm, Amelia Shankley).

A Chorus Line Richard Attenborough's valiantly rewarded and rewarding shot at screening the impossible: an audience-participation stage musical. Choreographically updated by Jeffrey Hornaday, it combines exuberant dance, a good song or three, with edgy dialogue. Showbiz loving itself, but for once so what? (Vicki Frederick, Audrey Landers).

Defence of the Realm Fumes of menace rise from David Drury's corrosive if erratic political chiller, written by Martin Stellman, reflecting current home-based concerns. Hoodwinked into disgracing awkward MP, tabloid reporter redemptively opens can of worms as Special Branch hovers (Gabriel Byrne, Denholm Elliott, Greta Scacchi).

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once more. By now it should be apparent that *White Nights* (Dostoevsky, Visconti, Bresson — *who?*) is a three-ring circus, with the barriers that usually keep acts separate hardly visible, and some resultant uncertainty of intent: had dapper Chaiko done a quick *entrechat* or Galina burst into 'My Love Is Chemical' (one of the soundtrack's many gems) I doubt it would have raised a titter or eyebrow. Where the piece does grow peculiarly silly occurs in a plot-device during which Raymond's blackness is Russianly sneered at, whereupon an early bewilderment at his choice of haven from US racism returns, double-strength. Twyla Tharp is overall choreographer, while the excellent Mr Hines is credited with 'Tap Improvography', a pleasantly surreal note on which to lower an iron curtain.

Chris Marker's **A.K.**, a characteristic, i.e. whimsical, handsome, kaleidoscopic, intelligent and randomly informative little Marker documentary, follows Akira Kurosawa during several days in November, 1984, on location by Mount Fuji for the making of *Ran*. The master behaves with impressive calm, given vagaries of weather and size of operation, sketching away under a blue sailor-cap, rarely raising his voice, surrounded by his faithful seven veteran collaborators, talking of the importance of Zen — old style — to mediaeval warriors, of blood, of horses: rarely of actors. Brilliant images of those coloured banners intercut with a yawning extra, snippets from other Kurosawa movies. John Ford told him, 'You really love rain,' and he replied, 'You really have looked at my films,' amused. And Marker offers a tiny poem of rain-shots. A Méliès-moon was made for a night set-piece, a fanciful scene. 'Thank you, Moon,' said A.K. courteously on its conclusion. The recurrent voice-over adds that the whole sequence vanished during editing. As sly details accumulate, you feel that Marker, too, really *has* looked at his subject's films. An engaging tribute.

As for **The Return of the Living Dead,** directed by Dan O'Bannon (who wrote *Alien* as well as this emetic 'comedy'), from my cringing seat in the stalls I was unaware they had ever gone away: if anything, more and sicker creatures ooze out of Special Effects, gobbet by gobbet, week by week. What to make of the 'genre'? A bloody great bonfire. □

Among this week's contributors:

Sheila MacLeod is the author of *The Art of Starvation* (Virago, 1981). Her most recent book is *Lawrence's Men and Woman* (Heinemann, 1985).

Donny O'Rourke writes regularly about folk music for the *Glasgow Herald* and is a reporter for Scottish TV.

Work in progress, for whose absence this week we apologise, will return in next week's issue.

RECORDS

Singing Land
DOUGIE MacLEAN *Dunkeld* DUN 004
What keeps this fiddler and songwriter from drifting into the MOR morasse is the perfect fusion of words, tune, accompaniment and vocal style. Slight enough songs, yes; but the melodies haunt and the lyrics hook. Combine MacLean's pibroch-tinged guitar playing with his burringchatty singing style and you have a very idiosyncratic sound indeed. Style transcends content in these songs of travelling, friendship, home and love. His two fascinated and fascinating musings on Australia are very fine indeed and 'This Love Will Carry' has an anthem-like swell to it which contrasts interestingly with the intimacy of its performance. Some of the pieces are a touch samey (MacLean seldom ventures up tempo) and one would have welcomed more fiddling. But a likeable addition to an attractive oeuvre by a performer who is Scottish without being parochial, conventional without being dull or tackily sentimental. Dougie MacLean should be heard.

Welcoming Paddy Home
THE BOYS OF THE LOUGH *Lough*
Lough 001
This splendid record has all the fluid, nuanced musicianship the Boys are renowned for, but with much more steam in the engine room. This comes from the jazzy, syncopated piano vamping of John Coakley — while Christy O'Leary, another newcomer (and another Irishman) brings with him some full-throated, chirpy Uillean pipering; as always. Ally Bain plays like a man who has sold his soul to the devil. All in all, the most compelling work the band has done in some time.

On the Rise
THE BATTLEFIELD BAND *Temple*
TP 021
This is pretty much the mixture as before and there's nothing wrong with that: assured, vervy playing; inventive reworkings of traditional material; sound new songs and tunes and another setting of a Joe Corrie socialist poem. Obtaining a new hearing for this Fife miner poet, who is now back in vogue, has been an important part of the Battlefield achievement. Good history makes good songs on 'Montrose' and 'The Dear Green Place' and we have, at last on record, their concert encore tour de force, 'Bad Moon Rising'. Yee Hah meets Hoots Mon. In their blending of traditional instruments (especially Dougie Pincock's fleet-fingered piping) and electronic sounds, the Battlefield Band are really peerless. One's only cavil is at the singing, but, given the instrumental virtuosity on display, this hardly matters.

Donny O'Rourke

THEATRE

Wild cherries

Benedict Nightingale

Futurists
DUSTY HUGHES *Cottesloe*
The Threepenny Opera
BRECHT & WEILL *Olivier*

UP GO THE STAGE lights on a postscript to Chekhov's most celebrated play. 'Our orchard is the whole of Russia,' opines Anya, 'this vast, amazing country.' 'You've always lived off the backs of others,' primly ripostes the student Trofimov, 'and so have your ancestors.' Then crash, bang, and red flags are everywhere, along with a vast caricature of Lenin sweeping spoof nobs into the dustbin of history; and suddenly we're in the Stray Dog Café in the Petrograd of 1921, a time and place of some turmoil, political and literary and literary-political. So begins **Futurists** at the National, Dusty Hughes's fascinating if flawed demonstration of the vulnerability, the potency, the resilience of the arts in that curious mix of heady oxygen and paralysing nerve-gas that constituted the atmosphere of the new world whose emergence Chekhov dimly foresaw.

As the play progresses, figures both exemplary and significant thrust themselves towards the footlights: Futurists, Symbolists, Acmeists, Everythingists, Nothingists, all hoping the triumphant Bolsheviks will recognise their particular faction as representing the regenerate soul of Russia. Mayakovsky — in Daniel Day Lewis's performance, a bony skinhead, scowling and dangerously leering — is embattled against the prolecultists, forerunners of the hacks who did in fact get Stalin's imprimatur. Akhmatova (Charlotte Cornwell) is there and an increasingly disillusioned Blok (Christopher Guinee) and Mandelstam (Roger Lloyd Pack), fretting at both the new iconoclasts and his own failure to afford new trousers. Meanwhile, Gorky (David Calder) is unhappily coming to terms with the news from Kronstadt, as well as his growing inability to influence his old friend Lenin on behalf of the writers who have come to him for help, sanctuary or just a square meal. The poet Gumilyov (Jack Shepherd), who eccentrically proclaims himself a monarchist, is arrested, imprisoned, shot.

Gorky's loss of innocence, the increasingly unmissable evidence that poets and poetry aren't as untouchable as he believes, combine to provide the evening with its shape; and yet shape is inevitably still a problem, given the abundance of Hughes's material and his laudable unwillingness to package it in blacks and whites. One sometimes has the impression of a documentary desperately trying and not quite managing to transform itself into an effective drama.

Yet that's not altogether a pity. After all, the

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feeling of sprawl, confusion, disorder, is also the feeling of the period Hughes is conscientiously chronicling. One wouldn't wish his play a lot more conventionally tidy, especially if that meant he had to cut severely back on information that's absorbing in itself, as well as suggestive. Isn't it paradoxically reassuring that poets should make authority edgy enough to want to repress them? At first I wasn't convinced of the need for Hughes's coda, in which Dutch TV interviews both the aged Akhmatova and Mandelstam's widow, who dedicated the Stalinist period to memorising her unpublishable husband's work and becoming a talking book herself. But it makes the point that the battles of 1921, like our less sensational tussles today, were fundamentally for the minds of generations not yet mature, adult, or even born.

Richard Eyre is the director, as he was of Gay's *Beggar's Opera* five years ago, also at the Cottesloe. If only savvy had prevailed in the councils of the National and he was in charge of the piece's reworking by Brecht and Weill and that reworking was intimately ensconced in the same auditorium! As it is, Peter Wood, best known for his productions of Stoppard and Restoration comedy, is master of ceremonies; and the ceremonies themselves have been elaborately sprinkled across the vaster acreage of the Olivier. The result isn't unexpected. **The Threepenny Opera** seems less politically scathing and socially pointed than *The Beggar's Opera*, Gay more authentically Brechtian than Brecht himself.

Mark you, part of the problem is the writing. Brecht could certainly be adepter as adaptor. The motivation is less emphatically established, the plot less clearly chronicled than in the original. Moreover, Gay's overriding point, that corruption in the lower depths isn't significantly different from that found on the upper social slopes, somehow manages to get more muzzied than sharpened during its journey through Brecht's doctrinaire conscience. Yet what's left can work in the theatre, and not only because of Weill's shrugging, worldly-wise harmonies, musical counterparts (as they inimitably are) of pictures of grotesque streets or nightclubs by Grosz or Beckmann.

What's wanted is sardonic tone, garish atmosphere, two commodities not consistently on offer at the National. Now Wood opts for naturalistic detail, realistic spectacle, like the cathouse from which the archcriminal Macheath escapes the cops; now he prefers grotesquerie, caricature, in the form of police with dog-masks; now he doesn't seem to know what he wants, or why. And if we honourably except Sara Kestelman's Mrs Peachum, whose slant-eyes exude a certain sly malice, there's no meanness, no bite, not even much energy to be found in the acting: not from Stephen Moore, who is pretty ponderous as the trader in down-and-out flesh, Jonathan Peachum; not from Sally Dexter as his daughter Polly nor from Joanna Foster as her rival, Lucy Brown; not even from Tim Curry, playing their joint lover and Peachum's enemy, Macheath himself. In fact, I can't recall an evening at the National when the cast seemed more tentative, more unsure of itself, more (dare I guess?) demoralised. □

Christine Roche

The right to choose?

Madeleine Paxman

LOOKING AROUND the small room crowded with nervous women, it occurred to me that I was for the first time looking at others like myself. The conference was on the 'New Reproductive Technologies'; the workshop was on the topic of infertility. It followed that most of the women in the room were infertile, for one reason or another — for, if there's one thing I've learnt about infertility, it's that few people who have not experienced it are truly interested in the plight of those who do.

I told myself I was going to this workshop out of pure curiosity. That is to say, although I have known for many years that I can't get pregnant, somehow I had never thought of myself as 'infertile'. The word carries enough stigma to silence anyone — images of barren land, being an outcast, not a 'real woman'. (And 'subfertile' isn't much better, with its overtones of inadequacy.)

Infertile women, to me, were women who were trying to have babies, but not succeeding in getting pregnant. As I don't want children *now*, and had always vaguely felt that if I did decide to have them I would simply be able to — through the ministrations of modern medicine if not by act of will — I conveniently ignored the whole issue. Sometimes I found it hard to explain to people why I didn't need to use contraception without incurring their unwanted pity and (sometimes morbid) curiosity.

Finding myself suddenly in a group of people for whom infertility was not merely an immediate problem, but a major crisis in their lives was thus rather a shock. Some of the women were quite frankly desperate. Their unfulfilled longing for a baby had ruined relationships, nagged nervously at them every time they passed a pram in the street, sent them combing medical textbooks in search of a possible miracle answer to their problem. Most had spent their days in hospital waiting-rooms, had sex to order on the days their temperature chart looked vaguely hopeful, been talked down to by doctors who barely knew them — 'Relax and enjoy life, dear, then you'll probably conceive.'

Often, the long round of tests and random treatments had not even produced a clear reason for their inability to conceive, let alone brought them the much-wanted pregnancy. One of the most frustrating things about being infertile is that hope never really dies — it always seems as if the right treatment is just around the corner . . . maybe.

I kept up my defences. My case *is* slightly different, in that I know what is wrong with me, and that the treatments have a high success rate. I could almost have a sense of 'choice' in the matter, although it seems to be family planning in the extreme. And then I remember that my doctor is always saying things like 'When you get married and want a family . . .' As though this were a taken-for-granted sequence of events, a test of my eligibility for motherhood, which he will then grant me.

It was when the workshop broke up and we returned to the plenary of the conference that I first began to feel uneasy. Here were feminists

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speaking about the new reproductive technologies — about the risk of their leading to genetic manipulation, the essential malevolence of *all* scientists towards women, the need to resist social pressures to be 'breeding machines'. Why do infertile women want children so badly that they are willing to subject themselves to all manner of invasive surgery and tests? Aren't there other things in life than having babies?

I could see the other women from the infertility group dotted about the room, uneasily silent. Our concerns were clearly under fire; why was it so hard to defend them? I know many women who said a few years back that they would never want children who have suddenly rediscovered maternal instinct with a vengeance — as their childbearing time runs out. The shelves of feminist bookstores are lined with books on the unique experiences of pregnancy, childbirth, being a mother . . . Are women who can't share this supposed to just 'Relax and enjoy life' as it is?

I have given a lot of thought to children — how they are isolated into tight family units, how mothers lose power by being marginalised from the world of work, but also gain it in their relationships with small, helpless beings. Whatever our ideals may be about rearing children in new ways, with greater social responsibility, it is still very hard for people to develop close and enduring relationships with children who are not 'theirs', either biologically or legally.

It is not unrealistic to be sceptical about scientific 'miracles'. Test-tube babies are the result of extremely expensive procedures, which still have a low success rate. Perhaps the money would be better spent on primary health care, reducing women's chances of becoming infertile in the first place. But when feminists condemn this treatment out of hand they are truly 'throwing out the baby with the bathwater' for their infertile sisters.

I have fought for many years for the right to contraception and abortion which I will never need myself. The choice to bear or not to bear children has always seemed a fundamental one for women's freedom. Now I feel deserted in my hour of need by the very movement which gave me these ideas. I don't necessarily want to bear my own children. But I don't want to go through life without living with and caring for children in a socially respected relationship. If this means parenthood, then I will try my hardest to become a parent — and I and other infertile people will need all the support we can get. □

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TELEVISION

Hugo Williams

Black out

ANYONE SWITCHING on late to *Voices*, **Modernity and its Discontents — The Moronic Inferno** (C4), last week's friendly between Martin Amis and Saul Bellow, might have been forgiven for thinking they had tuned to one of the marvellous re-runs of **Scotland Yard** (C4). Surely this was Edgar Lustgarten lamenting the sad case of Western Culture, in which the Self had been horribly overwhelmed by geo-socio-economico-political forces, then raped by the villainous TV. It was a bad business. You were just expecting Lustgarten to get up from his desk — weirdly denuded for this case — and move over to the wing-chair with his port to introduce the action, when the camera swung round to a younger figure, casually organising a roll-up. Was this the culprit perhaps? Had the series parted with tradition and ushered the defendant directly into the master's study?

Something like that. Cross-questioned about John Self, the hero of his novel *Money*, Amis pleaded that he was a representative of appetite. 'If you listen to the radiation of bodily needs chattering inside your head all day, it isn't very pretty. Self was an attempt to embody that kind of static in a believable character.' 'I am distracted and enervated by modern life,' said Amis later. 'The effort of keeping up with my education is much greater now.' Amis can still think and write like a streak, but tangling with the 'moronic inferno of modern culture' you risk, like this programme, becoming your own subject and vanishing up your own rope trick.

Chairman Michael Ignatieff looked out of his depth in such shallow thoughts as that private life had been replaced by public life, the private world disintegrating in the face of TV. 'It's at least as much a symptom as a cause,' said Amis, 'but one thing we haven't touched on is the disintegration of our leaders.'

It was at this point that my daughter muttered, 'Yes, but what about literature?' and went to bed with one of Amis's early novels. 'Are there any nuggets in the desert?' wondered Ignatieff. The idea of art was one, said Amis, but the quality of our society produced an art of self-desecration. Punks sprayed themselves with graffiti. They had vandalised themselves. That old group 'Kids Nowadays' watched TV with a channel switch in their hand. They were interested in noise, incident, special effects. This was the end of narrative and consequence, the consequences being too horrible to confront perhaps. 'We find ourselves standing on shrunken ground,' said Bellow. 'The transcendent has been kicked out of modern literature.'

'Literature was first about gods,' explained Amis, 'then heroes, then kings, then you and me. Now it's about *them*.' He jerked his thumb in the direction of our untidy living-rooms. It was our ignorance of death that was destroying us, said Bellow. 'If you can't see what power death holds over you, you aren't seeing what is going on at all.' Amis reminded him of his definitive image on the subject: 'Death is the dark backing a mirror needs before it can give off a reflection.' It sounded like a prescription to switch off and seek the meaning of your life in the grey picture of it reflected in the darkened screen. It seemed obvious that one should watch television more often in this way.

The BBC's think-tank, **Thinking Aloud** (BBC2), was also about the state of our culture and vice versa, but from a narrower perspective than *Voices*: to subsidise or not to subsidise. The argument turfed up the usual strongly-felt déjà-entendus — church patronage-di-da — which I won't rehearse. The only fun to be derived from the show was in matching people's politics to their suitings. The rounded shoulders and high waistcoat of Peter Levi's hand-tailored fustian seemed to be dictating his high-table strictures to him, just as the pinched-and-perky off-the-peg look of Christopher Frayling's jacket seemed to require from him a more democratic approach. Perhaps there is nothing we can do about anything, really, from the moment we get up in the morning and put on our clothes. I wonder what I think about state subsidies for the Arts when I'm asleep.

Psychiatrists at an American hospital believe that rape is learned behaviour which can be changed. It was this, rather than the knowledge that the human soul is a tabloid, that persuaded them to film the confrontation between rapists and victims (not theirs) which appeared on **Q.E.D** (BBC1) as *Understanding Rape*. As the opposing teams lined up on tight-fitting sofas in the out-prisoners' room, four to each side, it looked like a return match in the awful sex war, with the women playing at home this time. Conversation was stilted to venomous; understandably. 'To hear you talk about your outlet makes me want to puke,' said a woman when some wretch struggled to express the inexpressible in himself via euphemistic jargon. 'Have you ever thought of being castrated?' The camera lingered long on features brutalised by fear and self-loathing, but there were no takers.

The scene moved to Grendon Psychiatric Prison in Bucks where a doctor thought the American experiment might have been useful to the women by teaching them that they had not been to blame for what happened to them — less so to the men, who had spoken the language of therapy and clearly hadn't a clue who they were yet.

Grendon is the only prison in the UK where rapists are allowed to mix with other prisoners. It came as a surprise that the only reason this was possible was that there was a 'non-violence' rule there. Might it not be an idea to bring in this rule elsewhere, if only as an example? Rapists and other criminals alike at Grendon volunteered to appear together and in person for the programme, but the Home Office suppressed their gesture by blacking out their faces and shoving the subject back under the carpet. It might have been more appropriate to black out the face of the lawyer who explained smugly how he cleverly confuses rape victims into thinking they have been sexually assaulted — 'And where were his hands at this moment?' — instead of raped. □

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Weekend competition

No 2916 Set by George Cowley
The *NS* recently published a short story by James Kelman consisting of 67 words. Could we have even shorter stories? Max. three per entrant, by 3 April.

No 2913 Set by Margaret Rogers
Limericks explaining the Westland affair.

Report By Ernest Oswald fflap
A *Gargantuan* entry — of which the best part was rendered useless by libellousness (provoked, to no insignificant extent, by the fact that 'chopper' rhymes with 'wopper') or else by an ignorance of scansion. Of the rest, Katie Mallett's and Frank Williams's entries (both of them *epic* limericks) were splendid but somewhat over-extensive for the space that we have available; while Ron Rubin, Molly Fitton and J. J. Maling deserve special mention. To the peerless winners, five sovereigns each.

This boring old Westland affair
Is perfectly simple, I swear:
It's all about choppers,
MPs who came croppers
And parliamentary hot air.
WATSON WEEKS

A plot with a much-fêted hero,
Some workers whose options were zero,
Political croppers,
Unsaleable choppers
And more bloody fiddles than Nero.
WILL BELLENGER

There was Bristow, the guy with the shares,
And Bristol, the place with the spares,
And Britain the map
And Brittan the chap,
But it's over, and nobody cares.
GAVIN ROSS

A faithful bum-licker called Brittan
By his leaderene's bottom was smitten,
Till Tarzan's denouement
Produced a bowel movement
And poor little Leon got shit on.
M. BROWN

Said Michael, the traitorous cad:
'Sikorsky and Fiat? You're mad!'
His boss said, 'You're through,'
And Leon went, too —
Which, given the odds, wasn't bad.
NAOMI MARKS

First Heseltine left Thatcher's staff
'On principle' (boy, what a laugh!),
Then poor spaniel Brittan
Got badly beshitten,
But Thatcher knew nothing. Not half!
GERARD BENSON

Young Michael tried courting Swiss banks
To keep Westland & Co from the Yanks,
But the bid European
Was thwarted by Leon;
Though he hardly received much in thanks.
J.J. JOHNSTON

'Let the shareholders do as they may,'
Said Maggie, 'That must be the way.
And I'll say it again
And again and again
Until they all do as I say.'
DAWN CHORUS

The lessons of Westland are three:
One, Thatcher's as fly as can be;
Two, Brittan's as thick
As a lump of old brick;
Three, Heseltine's out of his tree.
NIGEL BUNKER

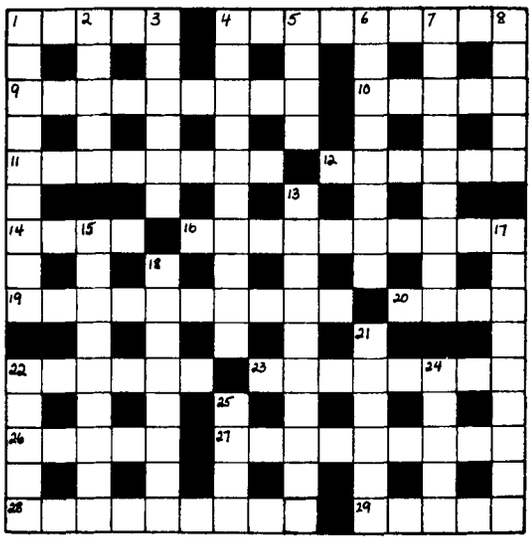
There was a bold ape-man called Tarzan
Said, 'Choppers don't need Stars and Bars on.'
Seems his blather was weak
'Cos he went for a leak:
So you'll get'em along with the cars, Ron.
STEPHEN COOK

Nanny Thatcher's got into a jam,
For young Michael keeps rocking the pram;
Alan's shouting, 'Fair shares!'
And, '*I won't* go upstairs!'
But Leon, he lies like a lamb.
ANN DEUTSCH

I've sussed out a new secret link;
It'll kick up a hell of a stink.
This friend of my brother
Knows Colette Bowe's mother . . .
Come back! You've not finished your drink.
NOEL PETTY

Weekend Crossword 1512

PRIZE: £10 Book Token for the first correct solution opened. Entries to Crossword 1512, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU by first post 8 April.



Name_____

Address_____

_____

ACROSS

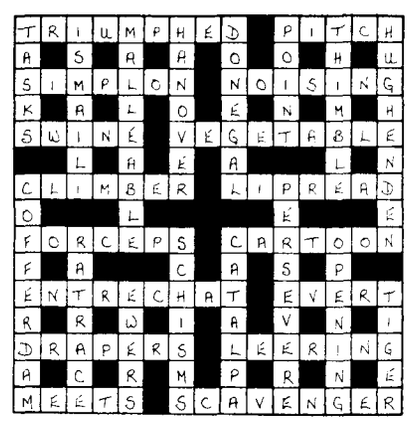
1. Born where there are animals, a writer with a pseudonym (5)
4. The craze for meaningless writing is a wartime peril (9)
9. Young lady whose train is carried back by a poet (9)
10. Dots indicate nearly all of the settlement (5)
11. A member put into cooking vessels as food (8)
12. Flag to stop something? (6)
14. Every fruit has soft part cut out (4)
16. Disease which may be made to harm us with time (10)
19. Do crime and act badly in the interests of the people (10)
20. Periods in which damage started to grow (4)
22. Rents given for acrobatic feat (6)
23. Said when leaves were scattered in autumn (8)
26. Provide fresh weapons for a number at the back (5)
27. Possibly he means it; if so, the rope is the answer (9)
28. Getting on with a fellow in town (9)
29. Kind of writing used in hasty letters (5)

DOWN

1. Cover for a midnight feast? (9)
2. Scope for spending time on a piece (5)
3. Go round giving thanks in memory (6)
4. He is a fool to try to get money out of the German leader (10)
5. Politician giving an address to the capital? (4)
6. Sad expression for losing time? (8)
7. As a member, have desires (9)
8. He is single-hearted although his fate is sealed (5)
13. Wondering if one is in an odd race (10)
15. Cloth needed when meal is spilt in seat (9)
17. Permit love in bad times as an excuse for kissing (9)
18. The northerner would be most upset if there were no second container of beer (8)
21. Safest arrangements for festive occasions (6)
22. Shoots up in line across (5)
24. Eastern light provides a message for all (5)
25. In the centre of the team I defend coolly (4)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1510



Prizewinner to 1510

K. J. Macpherson
(Isle of Lewis)

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APPOINTMENTS

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Appointment of

TRADE UNION ORGANISER – NORTH EAST AREA

Due to the establishment of a new post within the Union and subsequent internal promotion, a vacancy has arisen in the North East Area for an organiser, and applications are, therefore, invited from persons of suitable qualifications and Trade Union background for this post. Commencing salary **£10,404** per annum on scale rising to **£11,604** per annum. The successful applicant will be based on the Union's Darlington Office. Car provided. Good holidays and conditions of service.

For application form and job description please write to:

John James, Assistant Secretary (Organisation), BIFU, 55 Charles Street, Cardiff CF1 4ED. All application forms to be completed and returned not later than

MONDAY, 7 APRIL 1986

Administrative Assistant

This job provides the scope to gain work experience across a wide range of administrative and research work, including typing, secretarial, servicing of committees, and general organisational duties. A variety of office skills are necessary and experience of book keeping would be useful. A commitment to and understanding of the trade union movement, together with drive, initiative and imagination are required.
Salary: £9,063 pa for a 35 hr week.
The GLTURU is an equal opportunities employer and would particularly welcome applications from London's ethnic minorities.
Further details and application forms from: GLTURU, 2nd Floor, 13-16 Borough Road, London SE1 0AL. Tel: 01-928 2002. Closing date for completed application forms is 28 March, interviews will take place the first week in April.

Greater London Trade Union Resource Unit

NUPE

HEALTH & SAFETY — RESEARCH ASSISTANT

A vacancy has arisen in the Research Section at our Head Office for a Research Assistant. The successful candidate will undertake research on Health & Safety issues of concern to NUPE.

Candidates will be expected to show a commitment to the Labour movement, an ability to undertake research and a willingness to work with others. A good degree and experience in the field of Health and Safety would be an advantage.

The salary will be on the scale £10,391 to £11,552 per annum, inclusive of a London Weighting allowance.

NUPE is an equal opportunity employer. We encourage applications from women and men from all sections of the community irrespective of their sex, race, ethnic origin, colour, sexual orientation, marital status, disability or religion.

Application forms may be obtained by writing on a postcard to Maureen Underwood, National Union of Public Employees, 20 Grand Depot Road, London SE18 6SF to whom they should be returned by: **11 April 1986.**

Please mark your postcard "Health and Safety Research Assistant."

NUPE HEALTH AND SAFETY

ASTMS has the following vacancies

Divisional Officer: Southampton

This post will involve representation and negotiations on behalf of ASTMS members. The salary will be £14,242p.a., increasing over three years to £14,692p.a. The position will be subject to a probationary period. All applicants must have at least two years membership of a bona fide trade union.

Two Trainee Officers: South East & North West

There is a two year training period. The commencing salary will be £8,590.24p.a., plus £1,464.61 Inner London Allowance or £624.81 Outer London Allowance where appropriate, rising to £10,018.25p.a., after six months, £11,041.42p.a., after twelve months, and after a further twelve months satisfactory service the applicant will be appointed as a Divisional Officer. All applicants must have at least two years membership of a bona fide trade union.

Lecturer: Whitehall College, Bishop's Stortford

The appointee will join an existing team of Lecturers and will be required to teach on a wide range of courses including basic representative training, negotiating skills, job evaluation, pensions and legal rights. Additional duties include programme planning, curriculum development and preparation of teaching materials for use at the College and in the Union's Divisional educational provision. Teaching experience in trade union studies would be an advantage.

The salary is £14,242p.a., increasing over three years to £14,692p.a. The position will be subject to a probationary period. All applicants must have at least two years membership of a bona fide trade union.

The College is residential and evening and some weekend teaching is required.

ASTMS is an Equal Opportunities employer.

Application forms for the above posts are obtainable from: the General Secretary, ASTMS, 79 Camden Road, London NW1 9ES. The closing date for receipt of completed application forms is Friday 11 April 1986.

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GLC
Working for London

LONDON AGAINST RACISM

Equal opportunities at work.

WHO CARES WHEN THE GLC GOES?

The departure of the GLC is an immense blow to the employment hopes of many people. A blow felt deepest by those in our multi-racial community who have traditionally suffered most from unfair discrimination. People whose opportunities to gain well-paid jobs with good prospects have been limited and blocked, not just by London's escalating unemployment problems, but directly and indirectly by the prejudice of others.

The GLC's positive approach to equal opportunities radically improved the job prospects of those keen to help provide the services London needs. It was particularly successful in opening up careers and training opportunities for women in areas of work previously regarded as male preserves, for ethnic minority women and men in areas where they had been under-represented, and in ways that met the special needs of working people with disabilities. Meeting the training needs of young people and dealing with the special employment problems faced by single parents, lesbians and gay men were other key areas where targeted positive actions brought positive results, both for the individual and the Council.

The departure of the GLC does not put an end to the work it has helped pioneer. A growing number of London's employers are beginning to back their equal opportunities policies with the positive actions needed. London's local authorities have taken the lead and are actively working to make up for the inequalities caused by past discrimination and ensure fair treatment for all job applicants and staff.

This publication regularly carries a range of their job vacancy advertisements and, if you are keen to work for London, is a good starting point.

It is also worth being fully aware of what your rights are, under the Sex Discrimination and Race Relations Acts for example. You can get this information from the concerned bodies such as the Equal Opportunities Commission or Commission for Racial Equality. Details of the special advice centres working in your community and able to help with training and employment problems should be obtainable from your local Council offices.

The future of equal opportunities in London for you and everyone else who suffers disadvantage can only benefit by the determination with which you pursue your right to work.

Produced by GLC Personnel Department, PE/SE1, Room IB35, The County Hall, SE1 7PB.

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Cleveland

Professional Assistant

to the Labour Group

£12,168 – £13,308

The County Council has recognised the increasing workload falling on Elected Members and has agreed to provide the Leader and Members of the Majority Group with a full-time professional assistant.

The professional assistant will work under the direction of the Leader and will assist Members with a range of duties including:

* **the administration of group meetings and preparation of reports**
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* **the development of contacts with the public, M.P.s, Government Departments, trade unions and other local and regional organisations**
* **liaison between the political parties**
* **the processing of matters raised by Members on behalf of the community**
* ***carrying out research and fact-finding***

The ideal candidate will possess a clear analytical and enquiring mind and be able to work with the minimum of direction and supervision; be able to demonstrate a good understanding of how local and central government work and how they interface; be a good communicator and capable of relating to different types and levels of audience; and be a sound administrator.

The nature of the appointment demands a good deal of flexibility in working arrangements which will require some evening and weekend duties as well as the need to travel outside the County area on occasions.

The appointment will be made on a fixed term contract basis for the duration of the present Council up to May 1989.

Assistance with removal and relocation expenses will be provided in approved cases. Temporary housing accommodation may also be available within the County area.

Application forms and further particulars may be obtained from the County Secretary, Municipal Buildings, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS1 2QH (Telephone: Middlesbrough (0642) 248155 Ext 2011). Completed application forms should be returned to County Councillor Bryan Hanson O.B.E., Leader of the County Council.

The closing date is 11th April, 1986.

We are an equal opportunities employer.

County of Cleveland

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LONDON FIELDS garden flat. Two small bedrooms, huge 26' parquet floored living space, big kitchen, bathroom, gas c.h., 70' garden. £47,500. Keys available from Prince George P.H., 40 Parkholme Road, London E8. Tel: 01-254 4789. N12.9

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PURSUITS

EARLY-RETIRED professional woman, seeks partner(s), interested in investing in home with income (Guest House/B&B), preferably in South of England. Box (12)2641. N12.8

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INTUITIVE MASSAGE Group meets fortnightly North London. Lady organiser, established four years. New lady members especially welcome to counteract current imbalance. Regret no single males. Box (11)2615. N11.10

MID-LIFE, MIDDLE class, middle of the road, attractive, sociable, independent lady, seeks personal, dynamic, available male to enliven jaded social life. 30 mile radius Huntingdon Cambs. Box (11)2600. N11.11

HEARTSEARCH

ACTIVE, ATTRACTIVE, prof., divorced woman, happy, but misses caring/sharing. Socialist, usual cultural interests, seeks male counterpart, 50+, with whom to share spring, summer and maybe longer. Southern England (except London). Phone no. please. ALA. Box (11)2592. N11.13

AFRICAN GENTLEMAN, 28, mature student, quiet and a little on the shy side, seeks *soulmate of similar age, for lasting* relationship. Child(ren) welcome. Midlands/London. Box (12)2634. N12.11

ANTI-FASCIST male, 38, fine art consultant, long-term singleton, needs woman to make a stable pairing. Cultural interests, particularly theatre. Photo appreciated. London. Box (11)2624. N11.15

ARE YOU a lively minded individual, 18-80, enjoying the arts, discussions, conferences, rambles, dancing? The Progressive League caters for Mind, Body and Intellectual Stimulus. And it's so cheap. Ring 01-586 2274. N49.19

ATTRACTIVE, AFFECTIONATE, interesting male journalist, (divorced), youthful fifties, just returned London & lonesome, seeks Springtime romance, with warm-hearted, cuddlesome, preferably sensuous, feminine friend. Photo appreciated. Box (11)2627. N11.17

ATTRACTIVE, INDEPENDENT, aware woman, 34, seeks sensitive, thinking man, with the courage to commit himself to the adventure of discovering life and love together. Box (12)2671. N12.12

ATTRACTIVE, INTELLIGENT, warm, socialist female (NW London), seeks similar n/s male (35-55), not scared of commitment, to share Spring, food, wine, etc., and the future? (Box (12)2672. N12.13

ATTRACTIVE LADY lecturer – fortyish – many interests, seeks companionship and social life, with kind, good-humoured man. Box (12)2642. N12.14

ATTRACTIVE LADY wishes to meet a humorous, caring, genuine man, in his middle to late 30s, to share life's little pleasures with. London area. Box (12)2677. N12.15

ATTRACTIVE REDHEAD needs macho-looking, romantic, 30s-40s to love. Interests include: socialism, arts, lazy Sundays in bed doing the crossword, cinema, walking in Kew Gardens and drinking cheap Champagne in the bath. Can't stand liars. Box (11)2584. N11.18

BEARDED DOG-LOVER, 36, deafish, into lip-reading & re-discovering England. Conscientious lady friend would be appreciated this Spring, to roam around with. Box (11)2611. N11.20

BEAUTIFUL INDIAN woman (late twenties), seeks fogeyish gentleman to spoil her. Interests: politics, philosophy, music, art, travel. Photograph please. Box (12)2632. N12.16

BISEXUAL LADY, any nationality, possibly shy, sought and invited by English bachelor (male, youngish 45, own house), to correspond and form a close, loving relationship. Womanly intuition, warmness of nature, sympathetic understanding, and willingness to venture towards this new horizon are all that is required. Box (11)2593. N11.21

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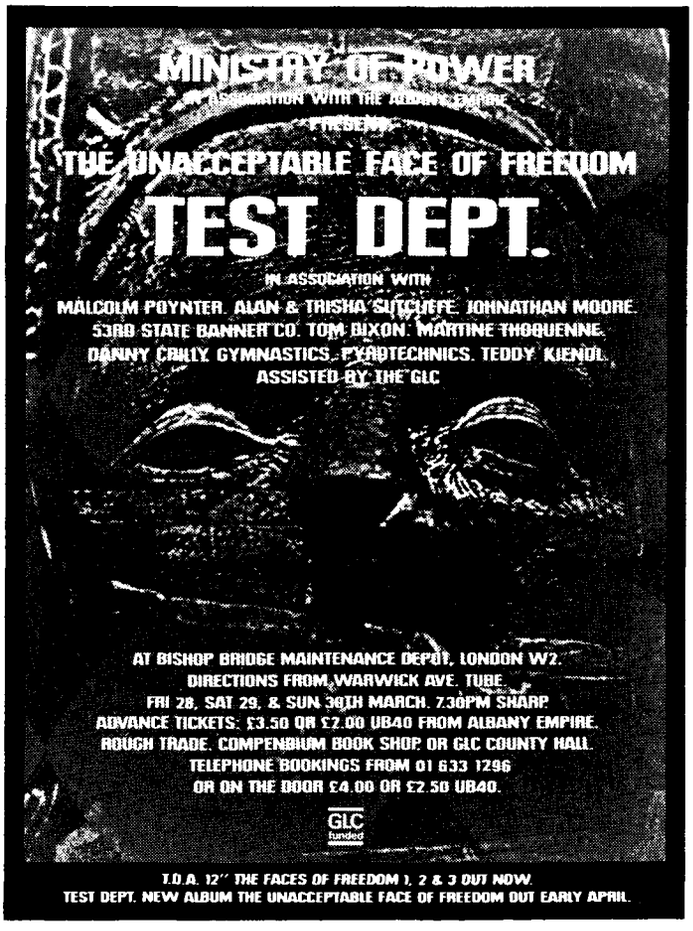
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AGENDA

FRI 21 MAR

SHAW SOCIETY. Performance by Ian and Elizabeth — "Theatre Through the Ages." At Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. Coffee 6.30pm, performance 7.00pm.

FRI 21-SAT 22 MAR

WESTERN SAHARA: TEN YEARS OF WAR AND REFUGEES. A CONFERENCE on the conflict in Northwest Africa dealing with Decolonisation, International Law, Women and Refugees, the Polisario Front, International and regional implications of the continuing war with Morocco.
Registration £12.50, £2.50 unwaged. Details: Refugee Studies Programme, Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St. Giles, Oxford. (0865 52952).

SAT 22 MAR

LONDON GOVERNMENT IN RETROSPECT, 1945-65. A Conference on the Post-War L.C.C. at County Hall, London SE1, 11am. Speakers include: Ken Livingstone, Jack Jones, Michael Ward, Jeremy Seabrook. Free. All Welcome.

SAT 22 MAR

CONFERENCE ON TAMIL REFUGEES organised by **Tamil Women's League** at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, WC1. 5.00-10.30pm. Speakers: Amrit Wilson, Women and Immigration, Mrs Subramaniam, Older Women Refugess, Representatives from other organisations. Cultural evening — video, dance, music & delicious Sri Lankan food. Entrance free.

WED 16 APR

SEMINAR ON PROMOTING INNOVATION IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY. Aimed at members and officers, trade union & voluntary groups. Applications by 4 April to CLES, Heron House, Brazennose St. Manchester M2 5HD. (061) 834 7036.

SUN 13—FRI 18 APR

INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE. University of Sussex. Speakers: Hans Gunter Brauch, Laszlo Balki, Nigel Young. Themes include: Alternative Security, Militarisation and Sexism, Peace Education, Arms Control & Disarmament. Details: Gari Donn, 0273 202516.

COURSE

IRISH STUDIES at Kilburn Polytechnic Wednesday and Thursday evenings 6.00-9.00pm. Language — Literature — History — The Irish in London. *RECEPTION* Wednesday 9th April at Priory Park Road NW6. Contact Geraldine Lander or Nora O'Mahony. Tel 328 8241.

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EASTER PUBLISHING DEADLINES

Advertisers please note that because of Easter we will be publishing one day early — (issue 28 March).

Deadline for all advertisement copy is
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The following week (issue 4 April) copy deadline is
11am on Tuesday 1 April.

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MISANTHROPIC MUSINGS : NOM de WOMB
YOU KNOW I'D MADE UP MY MIND TO ADOPT MY MOTHER'S FIRST NAME AS MY SECOND NAME AND BECOME BERYL OPALSCHILD
THUS AIDING THE TOPPLE OF PATRIARCHY ...!?
WELL AFTER TRYING IT OUT AT WORK I'VE DECIDED AGAINST IT
OH, WHY?
EVERYONE ASKED ME IF I'D JUST GOT MARRIED!
JANIS GOODMAN

CHESS

A RATHER inconvenient coincidence is that the 1986 British Chess Championships and the Kasparov-Karpov return match are scheduled to start on the same day — 28 July. Whilst London had an option to stage the whole of the world championship match, the British Chess Federation had just a little scope for juggling with these dates. But now FIDE President Campomanes has decreed that London will get games 1 to 12 only, with games 13 to 24 going to Leningrad.

Campomanes's continued tenure of the presidency is under challenge, as 1986 is a FIDE electoral year (he gained the office by ousting Olafsson in 1982) and a vigorous and well publicised campaign has already been launched for a rival ticket that proposes Lincoln Lucena (Brazil) as president and Raymond Keene (yes — the one who writes for that other weekly) as secretary general. Up to now talk of the Lucena position always meant the key to the basic technique of winning with Rook + Pawn v Rook, but in the future the reference may be to the Lucena-Keene manifesto, the first principle of which is 'to reinstitute democracy in the world of chess'. This is not quite the vapid sentiment in favour of virtue to be expected of all candidates for public office. If their campaign is successful Lucena and Keene would find themselves obliged to exercise executive authority on controversial matters. Campomanes can hardly be blamed for having done that. But he has been so bad at communicating the reasons for his decisions as to make suspicion about the quality of the decision-making inevitable.

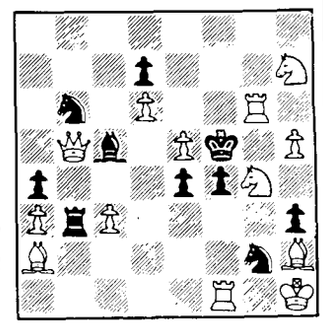
Looking forward to 28 July, the programme for the British Championships tells us that they will be held in Southampton Guildhall and announces that the sponsors, Kleinwort Grieveson, have come up with the jolly idea of offering a prize of £10,000 for a perfect score of 11/11. Their money is pretty safe. Like the majestic fluke of a hole-in-one, one cannot entirely exclude the possibility and there is a famous precedent in the 1963-4 US Championship, which Bobby Fischer won with 11/11. One of his less well-known victories from this event was in a rare variation of the Lopez that might be worth cultivating as Black.

Addison-Fischer, US Championship 1963-4. Ruy Lopez, Taimanov Variation.

1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 b5 5. Bb3 Na5 Why not hunt down the bishop, given that 6. Bxf7 + Kxf7 7. Nxe5 + Ke7 is an unconvincing sacrifice? The most problematic line that Black has to face seems to be 6. 0-0 d6 7. d4 exd4 8. Nxd4 Bb7 9. Bd2 Nxb3 10. Nxb3 with control of a5 and a threat of a2-a4. **6. d4 exd4 7. Qxd4 Ne7 8. c3?** Rather feeble. 8. Bg5 is better. **Nxb3 9. axb3 Bb7 10. Bf4 d5! 11. e5 c5!** Ready with 12. Qxc5? Nf5. So Black emerges with a strong pawn-centre as well as the bishop-pair. **12. Qd3 Ng6 13. Bg3 Be7 14. Nbd2 Nf8 15. 0-0 Ne6 16. Rad1 g5** A very interesting decision. Surely 16 . . . 0-0 can't be bad? Presumably Fischer does not want to allow any counterplay involving f2-f4-f5. **17. h3 h5 18. Rfe1 Qb6 19. Nf1 d4 20. N3d2 g4 21. h4 Qc6 22. Qe4 0-0-0 23. Qxc6 + Bxc6** With the better pawns, two bishops, and more active king for the ending, Fischer naturally wins from this position with some ease. **24. c4 Kd7 25. Ra1 Ra8 26. Ne4 Bxe4 27. Rxe4 Ng7 28. Nd2 Nf5 29. Rf4 Ke6 30. Ne4 bxc4 31. bxc4 Rhb8 32. Ra2 Rb4 33. Nd2 Nxh4 34. Bxh4 Bxh4 35. Re4 Bg5 36. f4 gxf3 37. Nxf3 Be3 + 38. Kh2 Rxc4 0-1.**

Problem

Here is a position from the finals of the last Lloyds Bank British Solving Championship, won by Jonathan Mestel. White to play and mate in 2. The finalists were allowed a maximum of 8 minutes to find the solution.



Solution

1. Rg1! so that if the Nb6 moves 2. Qxd7; if the Ng2 moves 2. Rf6; if the Bc5 moves, or if 1 . . . f3, 2. Nh6; if the Rb3 moves 2. Rg5; and if 1 . . . e3, 2. Qd3.

George Botterill

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A youth who had an ear bitten off in a brawl received it back through his letterbox — complete with earring — magistrates at Grantham, Lincs, heard yesterday. — *The Mirror* (Craig Voller)

PC Michael Butcher said that 90 per cent of supervisory officers sat in comfortable offices doing virtually nothing all day. The only achievement of police management teams was the introduction of soft lavatory paper at Acton police station, to which he is attached. — *Daily Telegraph* (James Scott)

The Conservative party political broadcast on Thursday struck many viewers by its use of a vivid film footage of a nesting bird as a symbol of the Government's prudent policies. But did Tory managers pick the right bird? According to my ornithological advisers it was a South African 'Hammerkop' — Afrikaans for 'Hammerhead'. It is commonly regarded as a bird of ill-omen: to see it may bring a death in the family. — *Daily Telegraph* (George Moor)

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